Foreign
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Daily Report

Central Eurasia

FBIS-SOV-94-053
Friday
18 March 1994

Daily Report
Central Eurasia

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Iranian Plane Crashes in Nagorno-Karabakh

LD1803104094 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1028 GMT 18 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—32 people were killed when an Iranian C-130 transport plane crashed three kilometres north of Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, overnight.

The plane took off from the Moscow International Sheremetyevo-2 Airport at 18.46 Moscow time /15.46 GMT/ bound for Tehran.

There were 19 family members of the employees of the Iranian Embassy in Moscow and 13 crew members, TASS learned on Friday from the Ministry for Emergency Situations.

The causes of the crash are being investigated.

May Have Been Shot Down

LD1803132694 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1304 GMT 18 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Anatoliy Yurkin]

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—Russian military experts do not rule out a possiblity that the Iranian C-130 plane which crashed near Stepanakert in Nagorno-Karabakh late on Thursday [17 March] had been shot down by a mobile antiaircraft missile.

The depressurised plane was flying at a low altitude and might have been mistaken for an alien craft by the warring sides in the enclave, the experts told ITAR-TASS on Friday.

They added that there are enough weapons in the combat zone, including the "Stinger" missiles, capable of destroying low-altitude targets.

Experts said their fears are also based on the fact that contact with the plane was lost all of a sudden and parts of the craft discovered on the ground show that the explosion had occurred in the air.

Such character of damages "happens after a strike of an anti- aircraft missile," experts said.

They also said it is necessary to find out why the plane had deviated from the pre-set route.

The experts categorically denied a possibility that the plane was going to land in stepanakert as the runway there is too short for such a class of aircraft. The crew undoubtedly knew about that, they added.

Crash Caused by 'Depressurization'

LD1803135394 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1329 GMT 18 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Gennadiy Bocharov]

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—The reason for the crash of an Iranian C-130 military aircraft whose debris were found this morning near Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabakh, is cockpit depressurization, well-informed sources told ITAR-TASS today.

Judging by radio talks of the crew and the air traffic controllers, a possibility of the plane's shot down in the Karabakh skies is minimum.

The C-130 plane, an analogue of the U.S. Hercules or the Russian AN-12, belongs to the Iranian Defence Ministry. It came to Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport several days ago to bring 52 Iranian servicemen studying in Moscow. On Wednesday [16 March] the plane was expected to leave for Tehran, but the take off was delayed till Thursday night.

The plane finally took off at 18:40 on March 17 carrying 32 passengers, including 19 family members of staffers of the Iranian Embassy in Moscow, and 13 crew members, and headed for Tehran.

However, flying at a height of 6,300 meters at 19:54 the crew commander got in touch with the Petrovskoye separate homing radio station and said the plane's cockpit had turned depressurized and they are losing height. Some time later he reported that their height is 5,100 meters.

The crew commander had an impression that the situation improved and climbed the height of 6,300 meters again. At that time an Aeroflot plane was flying in the opposite direction on its way from Iran.

The Iranian plane commander informed the Russian colleague he had a permission to cross the Russian and Armenian state borders. The conversation registered in the area of the Dzhulfe populated locality was the last. After that the Iranian military plane lost contact with the air traffic controllers and the flying aircraft.

Smoking debris of the Iranian plane and 32 dead bodies were found early this morning four kilometers away from Stepanakert.

The Iranian side has requested assistance in the air crash investigation from the Sheremetyevo international services and asked local bodies not to touch the debris.

Growing European Concern Over Nuclear Smuggling Issue

PM1703140294 London THE EUROPEAN in English 18-24 Mar 94 p 1-2

[Michael Bond report: "Europe Alert Over Threat of Nuclear Terrorism"]

[Text] London — Security forces in both western and eastern Europe are combining their efforts to tackle the growing menace of nuclear smuggling from countries of the former Soviet Union—described by Nato as one of the greatest threats to international security since the end of the Cold War.

Interpol, the international police agency, has now set up a specialised group, involving police forces in 24 European nations, THE EUROPEAN has learnt. Border guards and Customs officers in Poland, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Sweden have been equipped with radiation detectors and are being taught how to handle radioactive substances.

A senior Interpol officer, Hiroaki Takizawa, based at Lyon, said: "There is growing concern in European countries about nuclear smuggling. Our main problem is the lack of information. This is a new sort of crime—we do not yet know who is smuggling the material, who is buying it, and why."

Nuclear smuggling has become an increasingly lucrative business for professional dealers, but for the couriers and those who steal the material it is a dangerous—even lethal—game. Several have been caught carrying highly radioactive metals in their shirt pockets or strapped to their bodies. A Polish man died after carrying plutonium powder to Germany in his navel. "Most of the thieves are cowboys," said one investigator working in Moscow. "They have no idea they are dealing with highly dangerous substances."

Police in Germany, the country most commonly used to smuggle the material into the West, have registered nearly 350 cases of the illegal export of plutonium and other radioactive substances from the former Soviet Union in the past two years. They blame the burgeoning trade on falling security standards at former Soviet nuclear installations.

Interpol says radioactive material has been stolen from a vast range of sources. Russian authorities themselves have reported that during 1993 there were 900 attempts to gain illegal entry to nuclear installations, and a further 700 cases of workers trying to smuggle out materials. An investigator based in Moscow said: "There are wild rumours in Russia that it is possible to make money out of anything if it is radioactive. People are stealing from everywhere from waste dumps to medical laboratories."

Though there is no evidence that any nuclear substances have fallen into the hands of terrorists, and much of the stolen material would be useless for making weapons, a leaked report completed earlier this year by the German secret service identified potential customers. These included "two extremist Islamic fundamentalist groups".

It said there were "credible intelligence indications that high- ranking persons in ministries, embassies, industrial firms and research facilities" in eastern Europe were involved in nuclear smuggling.

The dismantling of nuclear arms in Russia and Ukraine over the next decade will produce a surplus of about 50 tonnes of virtually pure weapons-grade plutonium. Security officials fear some of this will fall into the hands of a rogue government or terrorist group, but they also point out that many other types of nuclear material can be lethal in the wrong hands.

Interpol is treating 30 nuclear smuggling cases as extremely serious but this could be just "the tip of the iceberg". Among cases being investigated are:

1. 250kg of uranium taken from a plant at Glazov.

2. 123 grammes of uranium stolen from Chernobyl nuclear power plant by an employee last October.

3. 260 lead boxes containing several hundred grammes of uranium from Kazakhstan. Six Ukrainians were arrested with them on the Moldovan border in December. In the capital of Moldova a lawyer was awaiting the delivery, for which he was due to pay $1.2 million. This uranium was 80 per cent enriched—virtually weapons-grade. It takes just 7kg of weapons-grade material to make a nuclear bomb.

Interparliamentary Assembly Agenda Outlined

LD1703233294 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 2220 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Lyudmila Yermakova]

[Text] St. Petersburg, 18 Mar—The fourth plenary sitting of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly opens today in the Tauride Palace in the city on the Neva.

There are several main issues on the preliminary agenda for the sitting: a list of recommendatory legislative enactments regulating economic relations within the framework of an Economic Union; drawing up legislative enactments for the fight against organized crime in the CIS; drawing up recommendations on a single educational space and on enhancing the social status of students, research, and doctoral students. The question of the role of the Assembly in strengthening the Commonwealth may also be considered.

Vladimir Shumeyko, chairman of the Council of the Interparliamentary Assembly and head of the Russian Federation Council, has arrived in order to attend the sitting.

No Agreement on Outlawing Blockades

LD1803103794 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0947 GMT 18 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Lyudmila Yermakova]

[Text] St. Petersburg March 18 TASS—The Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, meeting in St. Petersburg on Friday [18 March], could not reach a decision on the proposal, "on the unacceptability of implementing a blockade against member-countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States." As a result, the assembly's plenary session opened one hour later than scheduled.

Chairman of the assembly's council Vladimir Shumeyko reported that the delegations "could not achieve a consensus concerning one of the items in the agenda," noting that he "would not want to spread any information about the reasons for the disagreement."

The representatives of the delegations from Armenia and Azerbaijan had entirely opposite opinions concerning the proposal. Therefore, the participants of the plenary meeting decided to ask the delegation heads to converse with their colleagues during the break and decide if it is worthwhile to leave the blockade issue in the agenda for the assembly's current session.

Shumeyko expressed his opinion that everybody understands how difficult it is to resolve such questions. He said the assembly members had agreed to continue work on the blockade proposal and introduce it during the assembly's next meeting.

Assembly Chairman on Social Charter

LD1803112394 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1023 GMT 18 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Svetlana Ivanova]

[Text] St. Petersburg March 18 TASS—Commonwealth Interparliamentary Assembly Chairman Vladimir Shumeyko called on member countries to work out the Commonwealth's social charter to provide protection and guarantees to Commonwealth citizens in the social and labor sphere and supervise the fulfillment of interstate accords.

He said a social charter is needed to supplement the agreement on the economic alliance designed to offset the burden of ruptured economic links inside the former Soviet Union which was "built like one huge factory."

Shumeyko, who urged the search for new forms of cooperation within the Commonwealth in the cultural, economic, political and military fields, said a new legal infrastructure was needed to remove barriers from the path of economic and financial cooperation.

Russian Military Role on Tajikistan Viewed

PM1803115794 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 18 Mar 94 p 1

[Report by Aleksandr Pelts: "Who Pays for Peace Mission?"]

[Text] Hopes of a speedy peaceful political settlement in Tajikistan have proved unjustified on this occasion too. The talks between the Tajikistan official authorities and the armed opposition have been deferred. Nor did the recent meeting of foreign ministers of Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kirghizia [Kyrgyzstan] during which a desperate attempt was made to set up the dialogue broken off after the murder of Tajik Vice Premier Moyensho Nazarshoyev produce the expected results. Incidentally, Nazarshoyev should have headed the government delegation.

Naturally these unreassuring results in no way mean an end to attempts to set up the negotiations process with the opposition. But, as Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev stressed in Dushanbe after meeting with his counterparts from the Central Asian states, "...it is still too early to say when these efforts will produce results and it will be possible to hold talks."

Seeking the culprits in this situation is a complex matter. But some mass media seem to have been very successful here. And, in accusing both the official authorities and the opposition, they cite new culprits—the military. Those Russian servicemen who for two years now have been risking their lives to "hold" the Tajik-Afghan border and fulfilling their peacekeeping mission within the collective peacekeeping forces. Frankly, it is hard to think of anything more absurd. Moreover, stories have appeared that the "military lobby" is allegedly using every effort to try to acquire the status of peacekeeping forces under UN auspices in order to acquire certain benefits....

Please, good gentlemen! The Russian 201st motorized rifle division deployed in Tajikistan (nearly 6,000 men) has in fact for two years been performing peacekeeping functions without this status. We shall not list these functions—KRASNAYA ZVEZDA has been writing of them constantly since the very start of the civil war in Tajikistan.

Other central newspapers also regularly report the complex situation of the Russian servicemen who have found themselves at the epicenter of bloody events.

That is the first point. The second is that of the 16,000 Russian servicemen now serving in what are called trouble spots only 1,200 (in the former Yugoslavia) have the official status of peacekeeping forces. The others are as they say "simply serving under fire." Expenditure on their maintenance and backup has recently increased by a factor of 10-15 as was reported 16 March at a press conference by Defense Minister Pavel Grachev. And the money for this is found from the already meager military budget. As a result many military programs, primarily social programs, are being disrupted. Less housing is being construction, the defense complex is in a fevered state, and there is a lack of money for the most essential things for the troops' normal functioning....

As for the further development of events in Tajikistan itself, it may boldly be asserted that there is still a long way to go until peace and calm there. Politicians, the Foreign Ministry assured us, will do everything possible to ensure that talks with the opposition take place. The military, come what may, will ensure the conditions without which these talks are not possible at all.

ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 18 Mar

LD1803090094 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0545 GMT 18 Mar 94

["Press Review"—ITAR-TASS headline]

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS (ITAR-TASS)—ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI opens up with a series of items under the general headline "A search for accord in Russian society is now really threatened by political ambitions, mutual distrust, and double morality".

Mikhail Lapshin, leader of the Agrarian Party of Russia, assures, for example, that the party will participate in the elaboration of a memorandum of civil peace but will raise a lot of questions. In particular, about the revival of the Russian countryside and will see to it in every way that "accord would not lead to a suppression of part of society".

Nikolay Travkin, leader of the Democratic Party of Russia, said he visualises the way to civil accord only in the attainment of agreement between the two branches of power—executive and legislative—and not in some single document, however complete it is and whatever the number of parties signing it.

TRUD comments on Thursday's [17 March] remarks made by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin at the Federation council session, quoting him as saying that "we do not need a state of emergency in the economy" which is fully controlled by both the president of Russia and the government.

The newspaper's opinion is that if the measures mentioned by the Russian premier are implemented (namely, a solution to defaults of payments, a selective support of enterprises, restructuring, etc.) "the country will stand real chances to get out of the crisis."

RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA on the problem of non-payments.

Vladimir Chumakov, general director of the Yugtransgaz state-run enterprise, states that "defaults of payments are our sore point now. More than 60 per cent of the amount of sold gas has not been paid for."

Such a financial reality, Chumakov said, "deforms our economic, technical and social policies". In order to remove the cause of the economic disorganisation, he pleads the need to revise, first of all, the taxation policy and to determine a reform policy in a clear-cut manner "so that people and enterprises would know the direction we proceed along."

RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA singles out a report that Boris Shurinov, vice- president of the UFOlogy union, has accused a number of servicemen from the Russian Defence Ministry of "clandestine sales" of information on the UFO problem from secret archives to the Americans. Next week the newspaper promises to give details of the russian "UFO-gate".

KRASNAYA ZVEZDA (Red Star) on Pavel Grachev-William Perry meeting:

"A fundamentally new relationship—businesslike, partner's and mutually respectful—is taking shape between the two great powers. They are imbued not with chill but with business efficiency which is undoubtedly devoid of certain original enthusiasm which marked the turn of the decade".

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA carries an interview with Russia's former prosecutor-general Aleksey Kazannik who asserts that "the incumbent authorities lack moral principles" and that "selfish interests are predominating among them".

NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA on the start of overt confrontation between Presidents Yuriy Meshkov of the Crimea and President Leonid Kravchuk of Ukraine, who cancelled Meshkov's decree about an autonomy referendum.

"This balancing on the verge of a precipice may also easily lead to an aggravation of Russo-Ukrainian relations and turn the Crimea from an increasingly costly health resort into a hotbed of civil war".

NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA carries an interview with Gennadiy Voronin, deputy chairman of the Russian state committee for the defence industry, who warns that Russia runs the risk of "losing the status of great power" and emphasises that "the duty of the Russian state is to save its navy".

PRAVDA gives prominence to the text of an address to the citizens of Russia by the leaders of the left-centre opposition who call on people to unite in order to "prevent a final who will take care of national interests. But they will fail. Everybody will fail, I will be the next president, and Russia will triumph.

Defense Secretary Perry Views CIS Visit

PM1603140194 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 16 Mar 94 p 3

[Aleksandr Sychev article: "The Pentagon Chief Is Coming to Moscow To Arrange Relations and Also To Show Himself as a Politician"]

[Text] U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry is setting out on a week-long visit to Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine.

This is one of the first trips abroad by the Pentagon chief. At the end of last year, when Perry was offered the post of secretary of defense to replace Les Aspin, who had resigned, evil tongues maintained that the candidate was good in every respect—an experienced leader, an expert in high technologies, and a successful entrepreneur—but not a politician. In Kiev, Alma-Ata [Almaty], Minsk, and, particularly, Moscow, Perry will have to demonstrate his qualities as a political leader.

The Pentagon chief is coming to Moscow literally a couple of days after the Vladivostok meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev—which gives grounds for assuming that they are connected not only in time but in aims. In addition to tackling questions of bilateral cooperation between the United States and Russia in the military sphere, Perry must demonstrate that Washington's policy in support of democratic transformations in Russia has not changed, despite the friction which has arisen recently, and that the partnership will be continued.

On the eve of his trip the secretary spoke at the George Washington University. He emphasized that "all the major powers, including those friendly to the United States, have their own interests, which sometimes run counter to Washington's. We cannot expect Russia or any other great power to act against its own national interests." At the same time in relations between states there must not be even a hint of jealousy of others' successes. The defense secretary once again made a high assessment of Russia's contribution to settling the crisis in the Balkans and, in particular, to removing the Serb artillery from positions around Sarajevo.

Speaking of the main aims of U.S. policy toward Russia, Perry outlined to some extent the range of problems which he intends to touch on in Moscow—guarantees of security and of the prevention of the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the maintenance of regional stability in the region, including the states of the former Warsaw Pact.

Special attention will evidently be devoted to Russia's attitude to the NATO "Partnership [sotrudnichestvo] for Peace" program, which Moscow is in no hurry to subscribe to, although it has declared its readiness. As has been learned from informed sources, the problem of recycling radioactive elements will be discussed in the talks—a problem which, in the Russian leadership's opinion, can be resolved only with all possible international assistance. Moscow's offer of broader cooperation might meet with understanding on the part of the U.S. secretary, who believes that closer relations with Moscow not only help to advance democracy in Russia but also contribute to better understanding of what is happening there, on those immense expanses.

IZVESTIYA was told at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow that the program has not yet been finalized, and it is too soon to say anything specific about the visit.

Cited on U.S.-Russian Cooperation

PM1703104194 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 3

[Mikhail Pogorelyy report: "Both Partners and Competitors"]

[Text] In the new world, under radically changed conditions, Russia and America might be not only partners but also competitors, and each country might have its own strategic aims in international policy which do not coincide with the other side's interests. U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry made such an admission on the eve of his visit to Moscow.

The Pentagon head declared that there should be active cooperation with Russia in those cases where the two countries' interests coincide and that mutual attempts to act independently should be perceived calmly when such interests do not coincide. Americans should also be prepared, however, for the fact that the strategic aims of Russia and the United States might also contradict each other.

Precisely in order to prevent such a turn, the United States must give all possible support to Russia's democratic processes and peace-loving steps, the defense secretary emphasized. Among the main areas of cooperation in the military and military-political sphere between the two countries he particularly singled out cooperation in destroying chemical arsenals and part of the nuclear arsenals, in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and in converting defense production. The Pentagon chief named as examples of direct cooperation along military lines the exercise planned for this summer by Russian and U.S. peacemaking contingents—the 27th Motorized Rifle Division and the 3d Mechanized Division respectively.

Further on Perry's Visit

MK1703135094 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 1

[Pavel Felgengauer report under the "Visit" rubric: "Bill Perry Begins Talks in Moscow. U.S. Defense Secretary To Encounter Problems in the CIS"]

[Text] U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry arrives in Moscow today. At 1130 he will meet with General Pavel Grachev. The visit is purely working in nature, which is why "no agreements will be signed during the visit in Moscow," Pavel Grachev said to your SEGODNYA correspondent.

William Perry will stay in Moscow for two days. He is scheduled to meet not only with Defense Ministry chiefs, but also with Oleg Soskovets, Andrey Kozyrev, and Ivan Rybkin. Perry will then leave for Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine, where he will continue his "fact-finding mission," as such voyages are usually termed in America.

The visit's working status will enable Perry to discuss a wide range of problems: the situation in Russia and Bosnia, the "Partnership for Peace," nuclear and chemical disarmament, nuclear weapons in Ukraine and Kazakhstan, flank quotas under the CFE Treaty, and the ABM Treaty.

Currently Russia does not have global differences in principle with the United States, but there is a multitude of minor problems that are hard to resolve. At present it is quite clear that cash- poor Russia needs assistance in order to fulfill its obligations with regard to nuclear and chemical weapons. Washington is in principle ready to pay, but it would like to be able to supervise the way the U.S. taxpayers' money is being spent.

Yesterday, U.S. Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary and Russian Federation Nuclear Energy Minister Viktor Mikhaylov managed to agree in Washington on giving inspectors access to the storage sites of the two countries' "nuclear warhead plutonium components." The Americans would also like directly to observe the process of the warheads' dismantlement (for the same amount of money), but Russian nuclear specialists would rather keep the secrets of "operational" warheads' specific design.

An even more difficult problem concerns flank quotas for heavy armaments under the CFE Treaty. In Georgia, Armenia, and in the North Caucasus there is currently more armored equipment than what is allowed by the Paris Treaty of 1990 and the Tashkent Protocol of 1992. The CFE Treaty is scheduled to go into force from the beginning of 1995; Russia insists that the limitations be renegotiated, whereas Turkey demands that they be adhered to without fail. Ankara has also expressed its willingness to send its peacekeeping troops under a UN flag to Abkhazia (at Georgia's request), something which Moscow, in turn, opposes.

Representatives of the Clinton administration have so far expressed their "sympathy and understanding" with regard to all conflicting sides in the CIS and around it. After holding intensive consultations in Moscow and other capitals, Bill Perry will apparently find much extra food for thought.

Holds News Conference With Grachev

LD1703143694 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1338 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Aleksey Agureyev and Vladimir Gondusov]

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—Russia may join the "Partnership for Peace" initiative as early as the end of March, Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev told journalists on Thursday after finishing a meeting with United States Secretary of Defence William Perry.

"The groups of experts are already finishing their study of Russia's approach to joining 'Partnership for Peace,'" Grachev pointed out. "Basing our approach on Russia's particular needs, we will be ready to join the initiative already by the end of the month", he reported. The public will soon be able to have a look at the fundamental propositions of Russia's relationship with the partnership programme, he stated.

ITAR-TASS asked the defence ministers to comment on reports that the Pentagon in the near future intends to approve the allocation of funds to Russian and American corporations which will specialize in constructing housing for military personnel transferred to the reserves and in converting military enterprises to civilian production.

The American Defence Secretary announced that he would be discussing this topic with his Russian colleagues on Thursday and Friday. These talks should lead to the implementation of a joint programme which should require 60 to 100 million dollars in the next year, Perry said.

The defence secretary stated that his talks with Grachev focused on three global problems. First, the two sides had a good, positive discussion about the deepening of their working relations. Second, the partnership for peace initiative was discussed. Third, they discussed ways of improving Russian-American cooperation in Bosnia in order to speed up the peace process in that region, Perry explained.

During their discussion of the Bosnian question, the two sides agreed to cooperate as equal partners, he said.

The aim of their cooperation in bosnia is the continuation of talks with the Muslims, Croatians, and Bosnians in order to hasten the development of a peace agreement for the region, Perry said. Such an agreement would be in the interests of the United States, Russia, and all the countries in southeastern Europe.

Both ministers emphasized the importance of relations between their two departments in determining the character of relations between their respective countries. That is why a lot of attention during the meeting was paid to personal contacts between representatives of the two ministries, they said.

Discusses 'Partnership' With Kozyrev

LD1703175994 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1647 GMT 17 Mar 94

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature: Reports by diplomatic correspondents Dmitriy Voskoboinikov, Igor Porshnev, Vitaly Trubetskoy, and others]

[Text] Russia must be among the first and vigorous participants of partnership with NATO, Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev said in response to an Interfax question following his meeting with Secretary of Defense William Perry.

Kozyrev quoted Perry as saying that all countries willing to join NATO's Partnership for Peace program were equal. "It is also obvious, however, that Russia is a great power with its own interests. It would be strange if we were late arrivals," Kozyrev said meaning Partnership for Peace.

He said that the Russo-American cooperation must be equal, mutually beneficial and have clear cut goals.

"Pragmatism and usefulness must be the all-important factors. We should not be guided by ideological cliches. Like in a family, there are issues in the Russo-American relations which call for close coordination while in other fields every member of the family acts on his own trying not to harm the common interests," Kozyrev explained. He emphasized that neither the Russian nor the U.S. leaders intended to give up cooperation or partnership.

Answering another Interfax question, Kozyrev said that he had talked with Secretary of State Warren Christopher on the phone to discuss numerous international issues, notably the Middle East. He added that the UN Security Council would discuss a resolution on the Middle East Friday.

"This resolution must be passed urgently. The delay of its adoption hinders the resumption of Palestinian-Israeli talks," Kozyrev said. He emphasized that if the resolution were adopted Friday, Russian president's special envoy Viktor Posuvalyuk would go to Tunis to discuss with the PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat the specific day when the talks would resume.

Kozyrev said that the delay also provoked new tragedies and casualties in the Middle East. "It is important that the confrontation mechanism should not be allowed to gain momentum," he said.

He had also discussed Bosnia and Herzegovina with Christopher. "I expressed my view and the U.S. secretary of State agreed with it, that the Bosnian Moslems and Croats who intend to sign an agreement in Washington on March 18 on the setting up a federation should use this agreement as a tool for rapprochement and compromises with the third party, the Bosnian Serbs, rather than for opposing them jointly," Kozyrev said. He explained that Moscow would like to know if the federation was consistent with territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"We hope that this agreement will be a step forward. But even at this point it is important to know what the next steps will be and how the Bosnian Serbs will be incorporated into it," Kozyrev said.

Attends Conversion Committee Session

LD1703195694 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1700 GMT 17 Mar 94

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] At today's sitting of the Russian-American committee on conversion, Andrey Kokoshin, the Russian first deputy defense minister, and U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry stressed that Russia and America are entering a new phase of their relationship. Their speeches noted that the talk should now be not only about future prospects but also about specific ways to implement the conversion of Russia's defense complex.

The American side showed an interest in assisting Russia's conversion plans, not just with advice but also with hundreds of millions of dollars. In particular, William Perry emphasized the wish of the Americans to organize in Russia the manufacture of prefabricated housing for servicemen's families, and noted the mutual benefit of cooperation between the two countries on this issue.

Meets State Duma Speaker Rybkin

LD1803025194 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2335 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] On Thursday [17 March] Speaker of the Russian State Duma Ivan Rybkin met with U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry who is on an official visit to Moscow.

Chairman of the State Duma's Committee for International Affairs Vladimir Lukin, who attended the meeting, told Interfax that the meeting focused on some aspects of "pragmatic partnership" in the defense sphere between the two countries.

"It is not a tragedy that our interests in this sphere do not always coincide. These are normal relations between two great powers," Lukin said.

Remarks on Russian Ties

PM1803121594 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 18 Mar 94 p 2

[Vladimir Nadein article: "Military Bridge Between Two Superpowers. The U.S. Defense Secretary Begins a Tour of Countries of the Former USSR"]

[Text] U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry has called the present relationship between his country and Russia a "difficult love affair." Speaking in George Washington University two days before his trip to Russia, Kazakhstan, Belorussia [Belarus], and Ukraine, the American certainly could not have known that at roughly the same time, on the other side of the world, Russian Foreign Minister V. Kozyrev had resorted to words relating to the same feelings, having notified everyone both of the end of the honeymoon *in the Russian-U.S. relationship and of the* continuation of this promising marriage.

"Russia is our partner and our rival, at one and the same time," W. Perry said. "We must be aware that our relationship contains elements of both."

Since the declarations of passionate love have cooled a little following the capture of CIA staffer Ames, who from 1985 allegedly worked for the USSR and then for Russia, it was psychologically easy for the defense secretary to speak of a smooth revision of the line of his predecessor Les Aspin, who said only a few months ago that "the Russian military threat is disappearing and it does not seem that it will be revived."

Two Options, One Result

Perry outlined two probabilities in Russia's development.

"Reality No. 1 is that, even given the very best of the imaginable outcomes in Russia today, i.e. given a fully democratic and market-oriented Russia, this new Russia will have interests different from ours," the defense secretary said. "Even with our allies like France and Japan we have rivalry and competition in addition to our cooperation, and this will be the case with Russia."

"Reality No. 2 is the very worst of the possible outcomes, and we must be prepared for it. It is possible that Russia will emerge from its uneasy times as an autocratic, militarist, imperialist state hostile to the West. In such a situation we will truly be witnesses to the revival of something like the Cold War, and Russia, even without the Warsaw Pact, will remain an impressive nuclear arsenal."

In this event the secretary proposed erecting "fences" consisting of the following measures. First, the U.S. military budget, which has been subjected to cuts in the recent past, remains immutable for the immediate future. Second, U.S. nuclear weapons are improved and developed, including in the sphere of theoretical scientific development. Third, the program for building the submarine strike fleet is expanded, above all by means of the most modern Seawolf-class submarines. Fourth, special attention is devoted to improving U.S. tanks.

Responding to numerous critics inside the country, who accuse the present administration of making concessions to Russia on the one hand and of jostling it into a tight corner on the other, the defense secretary called the contrast between the two countries' rivalry and cooperation a "false dilemma." He acknowledged Russia's participation in the Bosnian crisis as highly valuable.

With His Own Eyes

The secretary said that an important part of his visit to Moscow, Alma-Ata [Almaty], Kiev, and Minsk will be the fact that he will be able to assure himself with his own eyes that the U.S. taxpayers' money is working in favor of U.S. national interests.

Speaking of the Nunn-Lugar program, so named for the senators who initiated the allocation of money for the destruction of the former Soviet nuclear missile arsenal, the secretary said that this is one of the least expensive ABM defense methods, since the threat is destroyed not in space but while still on the ground.

In Ukraine Perry will observe the process of dismantling ICBM's and sending them to Russia. In Belorussia he will see how the former nuclear missile weapon bases are being transformed. In Kazakhstan he will discuss with Kazakhs and Russians the likelihood of the joint use of Baykonur Cosmodrome for the commercial launching of rockets.

Although the defense secretary's speech was clearly meant for home consumption—which is why it abounded with the terminology of "national interests"—it was imbued not only with knowledge of Russia but also with unconcealed respect for its military men.

It is not just that Perry called Russia's military men the force on which the country's future largely depends. All his views exuded awareness of the fact that military associations, which represent an important part of the culture and the political milieu of both countries, can create an important channel of communication between the two countries.

Speaking of the telephone hot line and of the two telephones which stand on his desk and on that of Russian Defense Minister P. Grachev, Perry emphasized that professional misunderstandings have not yet arisen between the two commands.

Perry cited the upcoming joint maneuvers by peacekeeping forces as an example of the unusually quick development of mutual understanding between the two countries' defense ministries. Servicemen of the U.S. Army's 3d Infantry Division and the 27th Motorized Rifle Guards' Division will hold joint exercises this summer on the banks of the Volga.

Although problems of the reduction of nuclear arsenals and the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons predominate on Perry's agenda, he intends to discuss in detail in talks with colleagues questions of U.S. financial assistance in the conversion of large enterprises.

William Perry is not a professional military man. He is a scientist and a researcher who has worked for long years in spheres connected with the military industry. Although he has ruled out the likelihood of contacts with extreme forces in present-day Russian political life, he intends to hold intensive talks not only with President B.N. Yeltsin's staffers and not only at the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense but also with the leaders of the Duma and the Federal Assembly.

Paper Views Day One of Visit

PM1803123794 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 18 Mar 94 p 1

[Mikhail Pogorelyy report: "Russia-United States: Military Cooperation Is Better Than 'Cold' Peace"]

[Excerpts] A new concept, that of "cold" peace, has appeared in our political science lexicon recently. In the opinion of certain Western politicians, the present states of relations between Russia and the United States is characterized by this term. The "Cold" War and open military confrontation have ended.... Both sides have been expressing seemingly very appealing and correct slogans about cooperation, but in practice.... Furthermore, it is practice which shows that fundamentally new relations—businesslike relations befitting partners who respect one another—are taking shape between the two great powers. Relations which are imbued not by coldness but by professionalism, undoubtedly without the initial euphoria which marked the breakthrough of the 90's.

Perhaps this is why U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry's first visit to Russia is a working visit. And the questions he has come to discuss in our country are not those typical of grand ceremonies but are of the most everyday type, requiring mutual efforts to resolve them. The plane bringing Secretary Perry did not touch down at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport until 1000 hours on 17 March, but within 90 minutes the head of the Pentagon was already being received by Army General Pavel Grachev, Russia's defense minister.

The very first phrases which the leaders of the two countries' defense departments exchanged confirmed that they are both clearly aware that, to a very large extent, mutual relations between the defense ministries and the defense ministers themselves determine the overall climate of interstate relations between Russia and the United States. Security problems have been crucial in this sphere too long for them to be simply swept aside at a stroke. Now, as William Perry himself showed by what he said when addressing students and staff at George Washington University four days ago, ruling circles in the United States are still prey to the fear that Russia may revert to the path of an "authoritarian, militarist, imperialist power, hostile to the West."

It may be said here and now that these are groundless inventions, but it can also be acknowledged that the Americans do not rule out such a possibility—and consequently they are taking the corresponding preemptive measures. But the aims of the U.S. Defense Secretary's visit include not just a desire to convince himself of the sincerity of our country's peace-loving course but also to discuss joint efforts in the sphere of the conversion of defense production and progress in the elimination of that part of the former USSR's nuclear arsenal that is due to be scrapped (these questions will also be raised during his trip to Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belorussia [Belarus]). [passage omitted]

The very first talks in Russia, according to the U.S. guest, were satisfactory to both sides. As Army Gen. Pavel Grachev said at a brief meeting with journalists after the general talks and after a one-on-one conversation lasting almost 30 minutes, there was a significant coincidence of views on questions of bilateral ties, on the prospects for Russia's participation in the "Partnership for Peace" program, and on the Bosnian problem. Incidentally, Russia will be ready to sign the agreement on affiliating to the "Partnership for Peace" program as early as the end of March when the experts have completed their study of the necessary documents, the Russian Federation defense minister announced.

That same day William Perry had meetings and talks with Andrey Kokoshin, Russian Federation first deputy defense minister, and Colonel General Mikhail Kolesnikov, chief of the Russian Federation Armed Forces General Staff. On day two of the visit the head of the Pentagon will be received by Viktor Chernomyrdin, premier of the Russian Government.

Chernomyrdin Meets Perry 18 Mar

LD1803085894 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0835 GMT 18 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—Russia goes to accession to NATO's Partnership for Peace programme "consciously. We do not set any pre-conditions. I do not think this is a renunciation of our position," Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told journalists at the close of his talks with U.S. Secretary of Defence William Perry on Friday morning.

The two countries' cooperation in the conversion of the Russian Defence Ministry to civilan production and matters connected with nuclear disarmament, including that of Ukraine, were discussd, Chernomyrdin said.

Mr Perry pointed out that Russia would declare its joining NATO's Partnership for Peace programme at the end of March. "This will be a major event in NATO", because its programme will be virtually realised, he said, adding that "Russia is a great nuclear power and it will play a very special role in the Partnership for Peace".

The supply of technology to Russia for the manufacture of prefabricated houses for servicemen and for the elimination of chemical weapons was also discussed during the talks with the U.S. defence secretary, Chernomyrdin said. "We have approached closely the problem of eliminating biological weapons as well," the premier noted.

Chernomyrdin called for more active cooperation between the two countries under the auspices of the Russian-U.S. Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation Commission which is co-chaired by the Russian premier and U.S. Vice-President Albert Gore. The premier said the commission's regular session is to be held in the U.S. in May.

Yeltsin Directive on Detargeting Missiles Published

PM1803084394 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Mar 94 p 2

[Russian President's Directive no. 129-rp signed by Boris Yeltsin, dated 11 March 1994]

[Text] For the purposes of implementing the Moscow Declaration, signed by the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States on 14 January 1994, and the Joint Statement of the President of the Russian Federation and the Prime Minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland of 15 February 1994, the Russian Defense Ministry shall elaborate and, before 30 May 1994, implement measures to organize the daily activity of the strategic nuclear forces with nontargeted missiles.

[Signed] B. Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation
[Dated] 11 March 1994

Directive no. 129-rp

Accord Reached in U.S. on Halting Plutonium Production

LD1703202694 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 17 Mar 94

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] Russian Atomic Energy Minister Viktor Mikhaylov is on a working visit to Washington. The Russian and American sides have reached an accord on the quickest possible cessation of Russia's production of enriched plutonium-239.

At the sime time, it was also announced that Russia and the United States intend to carry out mutual inspections of facilities where parts of dismantled warheads containing plutonium are stored.

The production of weapons-grade plutonium at three industrial reactors in Russia—in Tomsk and Krasnoyarsk—will be halted at the end of this year.

Spokesman Welcomes U.S. Extension of Nuclear Moratorium

LD1703134094 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1246 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR TASS diplomatic correspondents Boris Krivoshey and Aleksandr Krylovich]

[Text] Moscow, 17 Mar—The decision by the U.S. President to prolong the nuclear test moratorium for another year, up to September 1995, has been met with satisfaction in Russia. This was stated at a briefing today by Grigoriy Karasin, director of the department of information and the press of the Russian Foreign Ministry.

He stressed that Russia's position on this question remained unchanged. We were the initiators of the trilateral moratorium on nuclear tests, which is being observed de facto by Britain, too, and we recently stated once again our intention of continuing to adhere to it. At the same time we called on the other nuclear countries to do the same, the spokesman of the Russian Foreign Ministry stated.

In connection with this, he recalled that during the Russian-U.S. summit meeting in Moscow, Presidents Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton confirmed Russia's and the U.S. commitment to achieving within a very short period an international treaty on the total banning of nuclear tests. Karasin also noted the constructive atmosphere at the talks on this question, which are taking place at the disarmament conference in Geneva.

U.S. Green Card Lottery Set; Intermediaries Tout Services

PM1703144794 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 15 Mar 94 p 8

[Report by Aleksandr Shalnev: "You Can Go to America for Good Even Without Spending $100"]

[Text] Back at the beginning of February the American Embassy in Moscow made a brief announcement: As of 1 October this year the U.S. Government will start holding a lottery, the winners of which will receive not money, but green cards—documents entitling them to take up permanent residence and to work on the other side of the Atlantic. Such lotteries are not new, they have been held for several years now, but it is the first time Russians and inhabitants of other countries of the former Union will be able to participate.

The lotteries are intended to enable people who do not meet the normal requirements for the issuing of a green card to settle in America. If, say, you do not have close relatives in the United States or there is no employer who is prepared to take full responsibility for you and assure the U.S. immigration authorities that unless you, a unique professional, are given work in America America's prosperity will suffer badly as a result.

Judging by information from the embassy, the process of receiving applications to participate in the lottery will begin in the spring. You will not have to fill in any form, all you will have to do is make a written application and send it to the appointed address.

The embassy issued another notice: "There will be no need to pay any intermediary for assistance in framing an application. Paying for such services will not improve the applicant's chances of success."

The other day it was confirmed for me at the embassy that no additional information has been issued since the February notification. In other words, the details are still being worked out and coordinated. Just wait.

But the intermediaries are already buzzing around all over the place. Some made a practical suggestion to the editorial boards of newspapers in the capital, including IZVESTIYA: Act as an agent for a U.S. law firm, help us distribute forms, and then we can share the proceeds.

They even sent us a copy of the form which lottery participants would be expected to fill in and which would then be passed on to the U.S. law firm for it to deliver to U.S. territory and register by a certain date.

What would the law firm charge for its services? $100 a head. The explanatory letter says that "families will double their chances if husband and wife fill in separate forms." That makes $200.

It appears that the U.S. law firm is operating entirely at the potential lottery participants' risk. And, of course, it is trying to make money, big money. Money out of our fellow citizens' ignorance and ingenuousness.

I talked on the telephone with those who, as it were, represent the firm's interests in Moscow. I tried to ascertain, in particular, the credentials of this firm, which has been set up in California by people who were compatriots of ours not long ago. Alas, my questions about its successes remained unanswered.

The interesting thing is, though, that Russian citizens will find it hard to do without the services of intermediaries. Judging by the experience of past lotteries, the U.S. authorities would like to "eliminate" as many applicants as possible and prevent them from participating in the lottery. And it will be very easy to do this, I was told: Either the application would be declared void on the pretext of some inaccuracy and thrown in the bin or it would take so long to get to the United States that it would fail to meet the deadline. The firm will be accurate and prompt.

"Is it true, as the American Embassy says, that the efforts of intermediaries will not improve the chances of success?"

"It is true," came the reply. "It is a lottery, after all."

Anyway, I personally would not be in too much of a hurry to hand over my greenbacks. At least until the U.S. immigration service has dotted all the i's and crossed all the t's, in particular on the question whether it is indeed possible to try one's luck in the lottery without intermediaries.

Commentary Views Pakistan Complaint Against U.S.

LD1703151794 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 0910 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Vassan Georgiyev commentary]

[Text] Foreign Minister of Pakistan Asif Ahmad Ali has charged the United States with supplying outdated weapons to the UN peacekeeping force in Somalia. Together with his country's Defense Minister, Asif Ahmad Ali visited Somalia to inspect the Pakistani contingent of the UN force. Now our commentary by Vassan Georgiyev:

The United States and the other Western countries want to withdraw their troops from Somalia by the end of this month. The UN force remaining in Somalia will consist of troops of Afro-Asian countries only. The Pakistani contingent will be the largest, more than 5,000 people. As the Pakistani foreign minister says, the United Nations troops remaining in Somalia would be left with outdated weapons, the Cobra helicopters, which have served their time, old models of tanks, and other military equipment. Asif Ahmad Ali also called attention to the shortage of drugs and dressings. The Pakistani foreign minister described as racist such an approach to the United Nations peacekeepers staying in Somalia. He accused the United States of contempt of the lives and health of servicemen from Pakistan and other states of Asia and Africa.The racism charges were immediately rejected by the United States Defense Department and Washington agreed to consider the issue of replacing outdated weapons.

At this point one may consider the matter settled. Yet one might consider at the same time whether out-of-date weapons were the only source of the Pakistani foreign minister's irritation. Until recently, as it received large amounts of weapons from the United States, Islamabad could hardly afford to criticize the Pentagon publicly. Yet the United States embargo on arms shipments to Pakistan following its attempts to create a nuclear bomb of its own, has changed Islamabad's policy toward Washington. It should not be ruled out that as he criticizes Washington for leaving outdated military equipment for the Pakistani contingent in Somalia, the foreign minister of Pakistan wants to remind Washington of the problem of his country's army in general; it is no secret that it is still equipped largely with American weapons but these weapons were manufactured in the '70s. Islamabad wants the United States to resume military aid to Pakistan, including the F-16 fighter bombers and other latest weapons. It appears that the foreign minister of Pakistan took advantage of the participation of the country's contingent in the United Nations peacekeeping forces to remind Washington of the needs of the Pakistani Army once again.

Official Secrecy Over Yeltsin Spain Visit 'Ridiculous'

PM1703162394 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 18 Mar 94 p 3

[Vladimir Vernikov report: "Kremlin and Smolensk Square Keep a Secret Known to Spanish Journalists and Doctors"]

[Text] Madrid—If we are to believe the Russian president's press spokesman, as reported by the newspaper EL PAIS, Boris Yeltsin is not going to undergo a medical examination at the Barcelona clinic where he had a spinal operation in 1990 following a bad plane landing.

Although, in the same newspaper's words, a brief stay in Barcelona is envisaged by the program for the president's upcoming official visit to Spain. But what visit are we talking about, since there has been no official announcement in the Russian press? And so naturally he cannot be going to Barcelona, where, according to the Western press, our president is to be examined for pain in the area of the disk he had operated on.

So why is it that the Spanish newspapers are not only citing the dates of the visit—11-13 April—and the list of documents to be signed in Madrid but are also discussing them, whereas the Russian Foreign Ministry and the presidential press service are keeping silent about the matter, confining themselves to denials on detail while not acknowledging the actual fact of the visit and its purposes? The information about a Boris Yeltsin visit is not repudiated but rather confirmed by official Spanish Government spokesmen, who are preparing for the visit in earnest.

Surely Moscow has not reverted to the say-nothing tactics of old, when people would learn of a visit by the latest general secretary at the moment he was taking off or even the following day?

The Russian Embassy in Spain has also been placed in a stupid and absurd position: Politicians and journalists are calling, asking questions, and demanding interviews, but our diplomats, being disciplined people, since they have not received orders from Moscow, are "giving evasive answers" while inwardly feeling uncomfortable at the need to lie to respected people.

In fact they all are perfectly well aware of both the precise date and the program of the visit—they themselves agreed it with the Spanish authorities, and the "advance party" called upon to support the visit is already in Moscow.

But since there have been no orders from the chiefs, there is no visit and "I cannot tell anyone anything." Nowadays this game of secrecy is ridiculous, there is barely any sense in it and it provides plenty of opportunity for false rumors.

For instance, EL PAIS writes that one of the purposes of the visit is the Russian president's desire to "make a deeper study on the spot of the essence of the so-called Moncloa Pact," which facilitated the peaceful transition from Francoism to democracy. Or, for instance, it is reported, citing the Barcelona doctor who operated on Boris Yeltsin, that he has now received a call from Moscow and has been warned that he will soon be seeing his former patient.

Especially as the doctor has already been brought to Moscow in the president's aircraft for a consultation. Who then is to be believed: the doctor or the president's press spokesman?

Churkin Comments on Talks With Croatia's Tudjman 16 Mar

LD1703221594 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1204 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent andrey Naryshkin]

[Text] Zagreb, 17 Mar—The scheduled holding of Croatian-Serbian talks on 22 March at the Russian Embassy in Zagreb is no surprise for the Croatian side. Russian special presidential representative Vitaliy Churkin told journalists this after his consultations on Wednesday [16 March] evening with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman. "We had previously been studying with President Tudjman and other Croatian officials the matter of the meeting that has been announced. It was therefore nothing unexpected for him," V. Churkin said. In his opinion, it is necessary next week above all to sign a document on ceasing hostile actions, which would guarantee the non-resumption of conflicts in and around the areas of Croatia that are under UN control.

"Recently we have been working really hard to make it possible. Agreement in principle to sign such a treaty was reached previously, but it did not happen for reasons of a political and emotional character," V. Churkin noted. "The Croatian side is ready for a dialogue and will take part in the talks at the Russian Embassy," Vesna Skare-Ozbolt, the Croatin president's press assistant, told the ITAR-TASS correspondent today.

Meanwhile, the ITAR-TASS correspondent learned today from well- informed diplomatic sources in Zagreb, that by no means all the obstacles capable of preventing the signing of the document next Tuesday have yet been removed. V. Churkin will continue discussion of the problems of the Croatian territories under UN control in Washington, for which he left by air this morning.

Czech Delegation Ends Visit; Friendship Treaty Discussed

LD1803095694 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0836 GMT 18 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS diplomatic correspondent Vladimir Taranov]

[Text] Moscow March 1 TASS [dateline as received]—"There are good grounds for the ratification of treaty of the friendly relations between Russia and Czechia," Jiri Pein, the chairman of the foreign relations committee of the chamber of deputies of the Czech Republic, told ITAR-TASS upon the conclusion of a visit of a parliamentary delegation of the Czech Republic to Moscow. He said the Russian side promised to speed up the ratification of the treaty which is of much importance for creating the legal grounds for cooperation between Russia and Czechia.

The Czech parliamentarian said that meetings with leaders of the Russian State Duma and Federation Council, with representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry and of Russian political parties indicated that changes had taken place in the Russian foreign policy. During meetings and conversations that the Czech parliamentary delegation had in Moscow the sides were not striving to convince each other of anything. They only exchanged opinions on matters of mutual interest, specifically, the attitude to the "Partnership for Peace", European security and prospects for economic cooperation. "We got convinced that Russia respects Czechia's sovereignty", Jiri Pein said.

Kozyrev Speaks on Pan-European Security

PM1703130194 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 3

[Report by Vyacheslav Yelagin and Valentin Ovsyannikov: "'Synchronizing Watches' in the Skyscraper on Smolensk Square"]

[Text] The enlarged session of the Russian Federation Foreign Ministry Foreign Policy Council involving eminent Russian political scientists and parliamentarians has rapidly become a feature of the Russian diplomatic department's activity. This shows that it is not screened off from its opponents by an "iron curtain of secrecy" even if they do say unpleasant things to the occupants of the "Smolensk Square skyscraper [Russian Foreign Ministry Building]." On this occasion the session was dedicated to the topical theme of "Problems of the formation of a Pan-European security system and relations between Russia and NATO."

The posing of this problem by the Russian Foreign Ministry, it seems, is due to the existence of different conceptual approaches both in the East and the West to the formation of a pan-European security system in the context of the possible expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance. Russian international affairs experts, like their Western counterparts, have differing approaches to the problem of mutual relations between Russia and NATO.

Thus the Foreign Ministry, it seems, has decided to "synchronize watches" and listen to the informed opinion of leading representatives of Russian political science and well-known Russian deputies engaged on foreign policy questions.

As usual the council session was addressed by A. Kozyrev, a fact which undoubtedly lent significance to the theme under discussion. In particular, the foreign minister advocated that the military, military-political, and military-industrial machines created in the period of confrontation be reformed into instruments of stability, security, and even cooperation between East and West. This is viewed as a real and practical path toward ensuring that the former enemies not only see one another as friends and allies but also arrive at the idea of the deepening and institutionalization of cooperation with NATO, which has been embodied in the concept "Partnership for Peace." Today, Russia is close to signing the corresponding agreements but, as the head of the Russian foreign policy department hinted, that will take at least 2-3 years.

It emerges from the minister's speech that both he and his colleagues have not lost faith in the qualitative strengthening of the CSCE during the new all-European summit in December this year. But that will require resolute actions in the security sphere within the framework of NATO, the EU, the Western European Union, and the CIS. Such an approach is most unlike Russia's diktat or veto toward the states of central and Eastern Europe and NATO.

It is also symptomatic that the head of Russian diplomacy could not ignore the "Zhirinovskiy factor." He uncompromisingly rejected the attempts by certain circles in the West and in central and Eastern Europe to exploit that factor and also the intentions to attribute an enemy image to Russia because the artificially created thesis of the Russian threat prevents people from seeing the real security problems.

It was stressed in particular that "Partnership for Peace" is not the finished article but merely a pattern for military-political cooperation. Victory in the Cold War, the minister stated, went not to NATO's military machine but to the democratic principles of the CSCE. This assessment of the CSCE's role deserves the utmost attention although different opinions exist in certain circles in the West, as is well known. Clearly, the different approaches should not lead to the division of Europe into opposing alliances and spheres of influence.

This speech was marked by its straightforwardness. A. Kozyrev did not resort to trickery and honestly set out the Russian position on the formation of a security system in Europe. But Moscow's efforts alone will clearly not be enough. There must be a cooperative approach from other states and the world community. A. Kozyrev's frank discussion with W. Christopher, his U.S. counterpart, in Vladivostok will make it clear whether such an approach is forthcoming.

Predictably enough, the minister's speech provoked a keen debate, which revealed quite a wide spread of opinions, ranging from agreement to accept the invitation to share NATO's "Partnership for Peace" concept and work with NATO on parallel courses, on the one hand, to pessimistic predictions on the idea of deepening cooperation with NATO on the other. But even the supporters of the first approach, and they formed the majority, had to acknowledge that although the North Atlantic bloc remains an important factor in the preservation of military-political stability in Europe it is nevertheless a rudiment of the Cold War and thus needs to be transformed itself.

One path for the alliance's evolution is to merge into the pan-European security structure, first and foremost under the auspices of the CSCE and the United Nations. But even here the viewpoints differed. Some political scientists did not rate highly the potential of the CSCE as a universal pan-European forum. The UN's rating was higher. There were also appeals to revive the UN military staff committee for the leadership of international peacemaking operations.

On the whole there were quite a few well argued appeals to the effect that broader account should be taken of the opinion of the people's masses when carrying out various foreign policy actions. For example, a warning was expressed that the unification of the central and East European countries and NATO will upset the existing balance of security and lead to a growth in nationalist feelings within Russian society. The reasons: The old stereotyped perceptions of the West and NATO are still strong in Russia.

It was also noted that Russia must reinforce its image as a democratic state which enjoys the reputation of being a reliable partner and must destroy the anti-Russian psychological complex which is entrenched in Eastern Europe by means of establishing relations of a new type based on trust and good-neighborliness.

A special place in the discussion was occupied by questions of defining the optimum forms of combining national priorities and collective principles in the formation of the pan-European security system which takes into account Russia's specific interests in European affairs. It was pointed out that cooperation between Russia and NATO must be carried out on a mutually beneficial and equitable basis and the Russian "Partnership" program must correspond as much as possible to the vital interests of our national security. It was proposed that contacts with NATO be strengthened by the signing of agreements on various aspects of international security, as happened in the days of the former USSR, and by building up bilateral cooperation with leading Western states.

Considerable attention was paid to the problems of involving our CIS partners in the efforts aimed at forming a European security system and to the effect that Russia's involvement in the "Partnership" program would have on centripetal processes within the Commonwealth itself. The idea was expressed that by joining NATO Russia will not lose its leading role in the CIS. Thus, prior to unification there should be a preliminary consultation with the CIS members. It was also said that Russia must take a more active part in resolving CIS problems, which would strengthen its role as guarantor on the territory of the CIS. But for that, as one speaker figuratively put it, it is necessary "not to bark but to bite." In other words, less talk, more action.

Individual political scientists put forward highly disturbing predictions about the future character of the development of our relations with China and other eastern neighbors after Russia affiliates to the "Partnership" concept.

It was also said that people should "come back down to earth" and see that the development of events in Europe is being formed under the influence of geopolitical interests which do not presuppose Russia's smooth entry into Europe. Moreover, there is a clear tendency toward "forcing" Russian out of the European area. NATO's expansion by means of the countries of central and Eastern Europe will inevitably lead to the isolation and weakening of Russia.

There were proposals on measures to curb the process of the admission of the central and Eastern European countries into NATO. For that, it was said, Russia should constantly remind people of its desire to become a full-fledged member of NATO. But since that is hardly likely to happen the Eastward expansion of the alliance will automatically stop.

Some of the political scientists tended to the view that Russia's affiliation to the "Partnership for Peace" concept must be carried out circumspectly because this could harm the Russian military-industrial complex and lead to the loss of arms sales markets. They spoke skeptically about Russia's participation in the transformation of the North Atlantic alliance because "we are the guests there, not the hosts." On the whole the Foreign Policy Council session confirmed the importance of a joint and constructive exchange of opinions among diplomats, scientists, parliamentarians, and other representatives of political and public circles on the most topical problems of Russian foreign policy. It may be said without exaggeration that the discussion was extraordinarily useful and was directly conducive to achieving a democratic consensus on approaches to current international problems.

Withdrawal of Nuclear Arms From Belarus Assessed

PM1703104594 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 2

[Viktor Litovkin report: "Belorussia [Belarus] Gives Up Strategic Nuclear Systems Forever. Now Only Russia Will Have Them"]

[Text] The full-scale withdrawal from Belorussian territory to Russia of the Strategic Rocket Forces grouping temporarily stationed in the cities of Mozyr and Lida has begun. IZVESTIYA's military correspondent learned this from well-informed sources in the Russian Defense Ministry. The Strategic Rocket Forces grouping in the Republic of Belorussia comprised two divisions (eight missile regiments) armed with the RS-12M "Topol" road-mobile missile system or, as it was called in the West, the SS-25. A total of 72 launchers.

The first regiment (nine "Topols") stationed in Postavy was withdrawn to Russia back in summer 1993. The next four regiments (36 launchers) will leave the republic in 1994 in accordance with the schedule agreed by the two states' defense ministries, and the rest in 1995. By mid-1996 the Mozyr and Lida missile divisions will have totally ceased to exist, they will be disbanded in accordance with the START Treaty.

At the same time the arms and combat hardware withdrawn from Belorussian territory will be deployed at Strategic Rocket Force bases and arsenals—they are to replace missiles and launchers that have outlived their service life in those regiments on combat alert duty on Russian territory that do not come under the START-1 and START-2 Treaties.

Our newspaper has already reported (No. 25, 9 February) that the modernized RS-12M system's standardized solid-fuel multiple-warhead missile is to be the basis of Russia's Strategic Rocket Forces. Moreover the ratio between fixed-site and mobile systems will be 30-40:70-60.

Specialists have calculated that these systems and the delivery to target of their warhead will cost the country 3-5 times less than for the sea-based nuclear forces and 5-10 times less than for the air force, although they do not cancel out the two other components of the nuclear triad. At the same time mobile launchers' survivability is 4-5 times greater than that of fixed-site launchers.

It is very hard to ascertain the location of a wheeled vehicle in a vast position area, but silo coordinates are always known. To support this idea specialists cite the example of the obsolete Iraqi Scud systems, whose launch preparations took many hours. During the Gulf War state-of-the-art U.S. reconnaissance systems, including space reconnaissance, were unable to detect them on the move and in position areas and consequently avert missile launches.

This factor, as well as many others, promises the Russian "Topols" a good future.

Incidentally, officers and warrant officers from the missile regiments being withdrawn from Belorussia and disbanded, along with the enlisted men and NCO's on compulsory military service and contract personnel, will not be discharged into the reserve. They will make up the strength of other Strategic Rocket Forces units experiencing today a considerable shortage of specialist missilemen of all kinds. I was assured at the Rocket Forces Main Staff that they have all been guaranteed the social rights and benefits extended to soldiers of the Russian Federation.

Officers and warrant officers from the regiments being withdrawn to Russia who do not want to leave Belorussia will be discharged into the reserve. They will enjoy all the rights of the citizens of the state in which they have remained to live, they and their families will keep the apartments in which they are now living, and those who have served in the army for 20 years or more will be paid a military pension in line with current legislation. At the Strategic Rocket Forces Main Staff I was assured that there has not been a single case of infringement of the legitimate rights of the Russian troops remaining in Belorussia.

Once the strategic offensive arms installations have been eliminated on Belorussian territory, the missilemen's military camps will be handed over to the republic's defense ministry and the vacated apartments to people on the military department's waiting list or to other Belorussian citizens.

Once it has given up its "Topols" Belorussia will be the only post-Soviet state to have carried out its commitments to the world community without any conditions and stipulations and to have really subscribed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a nonnuclear country.

Official Says Russia Not Involved in Crimean Developments

LD1703180594 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1647 GMT 17 Mar 94

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature: Reports by Diplomatic Correspondents Dmitriy Voskoboynikov, Igor Porshnev, Vitaliy Trubetskoy and others]

[Text] Russia has nothing to do with the development of events in the Crimea. It's an internal affair of Ukraine. It's essential not to give the radical-minded politicians in Kiev a pretext for playing "the Crimean card" for the purpose of aggravating the confrontation in relations with Moscow, a senior Russian diplomat dealing with Ukrainian problems told Interfax.

In comments on President Leonid Kravchuk's decision to cancel the Crimean leader Yuriy Meshkov's decree to carry out a referendum on relations with Kiev, the Russian diplomat said: "So far the Ukrainian leadership has no weighty legal arguments. After all no one can forbid the Crimean president to hold consultations with the populace. As a matter of fact, this does not signify the Crimea's secession from Ukraine. A referendum may have no direct legal force."

According to Interfax's interviewee, it's necessary to take into account the circumstance that Leonid Kravchuk's statements as to Simferopol's responsibility "for the possible complications" in its relationship with Kiev may play "a destabilizing role."

Kozyrev 'Cautious' on Dushanbe Talks Outcome

PM1703132594 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 17 Mar 94 First Edition pp 1, 2

[Maksim Yusin article: "Talks beween Tajik Authorities and Opposition Postponed Indefinitely"]

[Text] The main goal of Andrey Kozyrev's brief visit to Dushanbe was to seek clarification of the Tajik leadership's intentions on the eve of the talks with the opposition in Moscow. Having persuaded the hostile parties to start up a dialogue, Russia is seeking to reconcile the implacable adversaries' positions and secure specific moves from them to break the deadlock.

However, the hopes were not fulfilled. By all accounts there will be no talks between the Tajik authorities and the opposition in the foreseeable future. Kozyrev indirectly acknowledged this when conversing with journalists at the end of the meeting with his counterparts from the Central Asian CIS states: "Intensive work with the Tajik opposition is under way. We are entering into contact with everyone who agrees to dialogue. But it is too early to say at the moment when these efforts will yield results and it will be possible to hold talks."

Comparing this cautious evaluation with recent optimistic statements by Russian diplomats, it is possible to draw the conclusion that the results of the Dushanbe meetings were not at all what Kozyrev hoped for. It is not clear as yet who was to blame for the postponement of the talks due to start on 16 March. The Tajik leadership blames the opposition for digging its heels in. According to other information Uzbekistan, which has enormous influence on the Tajik regime, opposed the talks. There are serious grounds for thinking that Tajiikistan leader Emomali Rakhmonov felt no great desire to start a dialogue with the opposition. Having given in to Moscow's pressure and agreed to talks against his own will, he was merely waiting for an excuse to reconsider his decision.

That excuse so desired by the hard-liners in both camps was provided on the night of 10-11 March when Tajik Vice Premier Mazabsho Nazarshoyev was shot. A native of the Pamirs, which are regarded as the opposition's main stronghold, Nazarshoyev represented the interests of the people of his region in the government. According to one version that I got to hear in Dushanbe, the vice premier's removal was a carefully planned provocation by Rakhmonov supporters. The organizers of the murder achieved their end. Dialogue between the authorities and the opposition is on the verge of breakdown.

It can be predicted with certainty that all Russian diplomacy's efforts will be aimed at ensuring that talks do nevertheless take place. From Moscow's standpoint it it is essential above all to agree a cease-fire. The political settlement mechanism has not yet been defined. Russia is urging that elections involving the opposition be held as soon as possible; however, there are grounds for thinking that Rakhmonov and his team are not very keen on this.

According to the experts, if elections are held Rakhmonov and the Kulyab grouping, which supports him, are almost certain to lose. An opposition victory is also unlikely. The influential and numerous Leninabad clan has the greatest chance of success. Its representatives in the Tajik leadership are ready for elections. The next few weeks will show whether these people are able to influence Rakhmonov and prompt him to make a compromise.

In the opinion of an informed Russian Foreign Ministry staffer who asked to remain anonymous, time is working in favor of those who support elections and mutual concessions: "The military confrontation cannot go on for ever. People's patience is running out. The collapse of the Tajik economy has reached dire proportions. Only the end of fighting and political stabilization can create the conditions necessary to normalize the situation. Otherwise, Tajikistan will break up. And that is understood by the leaders of both the belligerent sides."

As far as Moscow is concerned, the last thing it wants is to be dragged into a long-drawn-out, Afghanistan-type conflict. Neither the diplomats nor the military cherish any illusions: It is impossible to destroy the Tajik opposition detachments operating from Afghan territory. The confrontation between them and Russian border guards threatens to bring new Russian casualties and cause a welling-up of discontent in the country and huge material losses.

"The Tajik problems cannot be resolved militarily. All hope is pinned on dialogue between the authorities and the opposition. I hope it will prove fruitful," Colonel General Boris Pyankov, commander in chief of the CIS Armed Forces in Tajikistan, told journalists. Neither Russia nor the other Commonwealth members committed to protecting the Tajik-Afghan border are hurrying to send the promised reinforcements. According to Pyankov, only Kazakhstan has brought its border contingent up to full strength. Russia, Uzbekistan, and Kirgiziya [Kyrgyzstan] have yet to do this. The Russian border detachments are made up of 70 percent Tajiks right now. That figure will become even larger in the immediate future. Rakhmonov has promised Kozyrev that another 5,000 Tajik draftees will be sent to the border.

Moscow is gradually transferring the protection of the border with Afghanistan to the Tajiks themselves. However, it is most likely that this process will drag on and that the white, blue, and red flag will fly over the border posts on the southern marches of Tajikistan for a long while yet. "Russia's special role in Tajikistan is not a whim on our part but an inescapable fact. I told this to Secretary of State Christopher in Vladivostok. If we leave Tajikistan, chaos will ensure here. Look what happened in neighboring Afghanistan. We cannot allow that. All attempts to violate the border will be stopped in the most resolute fashion. There is no point in the opposition's trying to put our endurance to the test; it is better to rely on peace talks," Kozyrev told the journalists accompanying him on his visit.

Foreign Ministry To Promote Political Settlement in Angola

LD1703154194 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1426 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS diplomatic correspondents Boris Krivoshey and Aleksandr Krylovich]

[text] Moscow March 17 TASS—Russia intends, as before, to exert vigorous efforts in the framework of the United Nations Security Council to promote an early achievement of political settlement in Angola, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin told a briefing on Thursday.

"In view of the acuteness and complexity of the situation in Angola it would be expedient for the U.N. secretary-general to submit to the Security Council a report on the course of the negotiations in Lusaka early in April. This would enable the Security Council to respond adequately and timely to the development of the peacemaking process in Angola," Karasin said.

Russian representatives are prepared to continue to meet with participants in the negotiating process in Luanda, Lusaka and, if needed, in Moscow, Karasin said.

Deputy Foreign Minister Interviewed on Middle East

LD1703205894

[Editorial Report] Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian at 1725 GMT on 17 March broadcasts the 10-minute "Details" program presented by Nikolay Svandize, which discussed international efforts to solve the problems of the Middle East, as the UN Security Council prepares to adopt a resolution on the Hebron massacre. The program consists of excerpts from an interview with Igor Ivanov, Russian first deputy foreign minister, a dispatch from Israel by correspondent Vladislav Flyarkovskiy, and Svanidze's own comments.

The program begins with comments by Igor Ivanov, who says: "The withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and the Jericho region was due to have been completed by 13 April, after which the process of establishing Palestinian self-rule would have begun. You see, these were specific and practical steps. They were not just talks, they were practical steps that would have been the result of the complex talks that continued over two years.

"It is difficult to say at the moment whether this murderer was acting individually or whether he was an instrument in a larger conspiracy, as both the Israeli and the Palestinian sides have set up investigative commissions. As you know, there are substantial disagreements about this question as well, and the results of these investigative groups will show how things really are.

"But independently of that, unfortunately this crime had the most negative consequences on a wider scale."

Svanidze then introduces the theme of the program, noting that the United Nations plans to adopt a resolution of principle on the Middle East tomorrow, and that Russia and the United States are named as the resolution's cosponsors. Ivanov's interview continues:

"On the one hand, some people in the region tried immediately to interpret our activity as a kind of attempt, following our diplomatic successes in the Yugoslav settlement, to develop this success in the Middle East. Others also tried to interpret it as an attempt to, as it were, in some way pass the United States on the bend in that region.

"In our view, a very tough UN Security Council resolution should now be adopted, which on the one hand condemns the crime in Hebron and on the other, outlines specific measures that would both promote the security of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories and clear the way for the resumption of the talks process. Why do we believe this? Because today those tiny shoots of trust that had just appeared between the Israelis and the Palestinians have been seriously damaged."

There then follows a three-minute dispatch from Jerusalem by correspondent Vladislav Flyarkovskiy, who describes the situation in the region three weeks on from the Hebron massacre. Ivanov's interview continues:

"I would like to explain that this resolution contains a condemnation of the Hebron crime, and an appeal to the Israeli side to adopt measures to prevent more acts of violence toward Palestinians. It contains an appeal for measures to be worked out to ensure the security of Palestinians, including the sending of this or that international presence. And it contains an appeal to the two cosponsors—the United States and Russia—to adopt the necessary measures to ensure that the resolution clauses are implemented, and to promote the continuation of the peace process."

The final two interview excerpts are interspersed with Svanidze's own comments and conclusions:

Ivanov continues: "I am not expecting any opposition to the resolution. There may be certain privately held views about individual clauses in the preamble to the resolution, particularly where the references to Jerusalem are concerned, where the United States will probably abstain. There should be full unanimity concerning the resolution proper.

"As far as our efforts in the Middle East are concerned, I repeat that they are currently very carefully thought out, and they meet our long-term interests."

Svanidze then ends the program with his own comments.

Foreign Ministry 'Concerned' at DPRK Inspection Problems

LD1703122794 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1138 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Vladimir Solntsev]

[Excerpt] Moscow, 17 Mar— The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is concerned that a group of experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was unable fully to carry out the tasks of inspecting the nuclear facilities of the DPRK. A high-ranking source at the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs told an ITAR-TASS correspondent this today. "This creates quite a serious situation," the diplomat said.

In his words, Russia is holding consultations on this matter with other IAEA members. He noted however that there is still some time before the meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, set for 21 March, at which the results of the inspections are due to be discussed. Consequently, the situation could develop in a variety of ways, and the Russian Foreign Ministry will be following it carefully. [passage omitted]

Political Issues

Rumors About Attempt on Yeltsin's Life in Sochi Denied

MK1803085094 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 18 Mar 94 p 14

[Mikhail Lashch report: "Rumors About Attempt on President's Life. There Has Been No Attempt"]

[Text] Yesterday rumors spread in Moscow about an attempt on President Boris Yeltsin's life. KOMMERSANT-DAILY's correspondent turned to the Russian Main Security Administration [MSA] for comment. According to MSA information, what gave rise to the rumor was the following event.

Andrey Oligov, press secretary of the president's Main Security Administration, said that on 15 March security officers at the president's summer house detained a 45-year-old local resident who tried to sneak into the compound. The intruder said that he entered the guarded territory because he was looking for his missing son, a serviceman. This information was checked and proved to be correct; afterward the detainee was released.

According to KOMMERSANT-DAILY information, yesterday at 1530 Aleksandr Korzhakov, chief of the presidential security service, called the Kremlin from Sochi to say that no other incidents have occurred on the territory of the presidential residence in Sochi.

The president continues his vacation in Sochi; his health is normal.

Yeltsin Endorses Stepashin as Security Council Member

LD1803091794 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0848 GMT 18 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Moscow, 18 Mar—President Boris Yeltsin today endorsed by decree Sergey Stepashin, director of the Federal Counter-Intelligence Service, as a member of the Russian Security Council. ITAR-TASS was informed of this today by the Russian president's press-service.

Reinstated USSR Impossible; New Paths to Unification Needed

PM1803110794 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 1

[Oleg Odnokolenko article: "We Will Not Reinstate in Its Old Form the Union Which We Have Lost"]

[Text] This memorable date will hardly be celebrated on an official level. But, be that as it may, it marks a truly historic event: Exactly three years ago, 17 March, the former Soviet people voted by an overwhelming majority to preserve the unified state—the USSR. What happened next and how the experience of the first Russian referendum ultimately ended is well known. It would, of course, be possible to say quite a few spiteful things about those who like to "consult with the people." Nevertheless, the following nuance appears more noteworthy: Some time later the same people who had said "yes" to the Union voted equally readily for independence, this time at a regional level.

...We became witnesses to and participants in the notorious sovereignty bandwagon. On departing, each republic took with it as much freedom, economics, politics, security, and even religion as it wanted. The former Union territory became the most "president-intensive" in the world.

But now sociologists, sounding out public opinion among the dwellers of the ruins of the "evil empire," once again present us with sensational statistics: It turns out that the overwhelming majority of former Soviet citizens are now, once again, not averse to living beneath the same roof. And not just the ordinary men in the street! Even well-known politicians among the most frenzied radicals weep publicly for the "prematurely deceased USSR."

Not that these tears will be believed any longer not only in Moscow but even, probably, in Uryupinsk. It is all easily explained: Separatism is now an unpopular field. Nobody, not even the citizens of the "small but proud" Baltic republics, has benefited from the partition and breakup. Of the entire former Soviet population only the local elites—leadership, financial, entertainment—are prospering. Previously they too were ordinary Aeroflot passengers, but now they fly in their own airplanes with a retinue and "retainers." Former party workers, former commodity experts, former minor but cunning officials, unremarkable officers.... Surely the purport of that all-Union shake-up was not just that a band should play at the airport for someone and a saber be waved about?

Oh, how strong our people are, nonetheless, with hindsight! How trustful! First they were prepared to follow Kirsan Ilyumzhinov's white cloak into the boundless sea of independence, now they look somewhat too suspiciously upon the "political" beard of Aleksandr Rutskoy.... Again no good will come of it.... They would like very much not to be disappointed again. Three whole years have passed, nonetheless! Russia is no longer the same, and the entire post-Soviet area has greatly changed. So we ask revolutionary gentlemen not to worry: A return to the old ways is simply impossible. We must build our common home anew and seek paths to unification anew—to effective unification which infringes nobody's interests. We have already lived for long enough in states where everything—from the economy to the borders—is conventional, and it is time we thought seriously about the future.

Memo on Upcoming 'Palace Coup' Reported

MK1803112094 Moscow OBSHCHAYA GAZETA in Russian No. 11/36, 18-24 Mar 94 (Signed to press 17 Mar) p 1

[Unattributed report: "Buds Are Swelling: An Omen of a Coup?"]

[Text] **What are the founding fathers afraid of?**

On 17 March, a group of fairly well known persons announced in Moscow the creation of a new public movement: "Accord for Russia." The founding fathers include: Valeriy Zorkin, Aleksandr Rutskoy, Gennadiy Zyuganov, Mikhail Lapshin, Petr Romanov, Aman Tuleyev, Sergey Glazyev, Sergey Baburin, Vasiliy Lipitskiy, Aleksandr Tsipko, and others. The list remains open; the movement is ready to admit anyone who is concerned over Russia's fate. At present, the movement's founders themselves are worried most of all by the threat of "a junta-style palace coup." Valeriy Zorkin said at the new movement's first press conference: "The signs of a coup are evident. Currently, analytical memos of this sort have been drawn up and are circulating, various coup theories are under discussion. Something similar occurred on the eve of 20 March and 21 September of last year. It is well known that subsequently the forecasts spelled out in the analytical memos proved to be correct." Zorkin's fears were shared by Gennadiy Zyuganov.

OBSHCHAYA GAZETA has managed to obtain an analytical memo. (It is published in a slightly abridged form.)

Confidentially

Theory 1

(according to information as of 16 March 1994)

Attention! Upon the emergence of a new theory the previous ones are discarded.

According to available information, a group of statesmen—First Deputy Prime Minister O. Soskovets, General Staff Chief M. Kolesnikov, and Moscow Mayor Y. Luzhkov—plan to make an attempt to depose Boris Yeltsin. V. Shumeyko, M. Poltoranin, B. Mikhaylov, chairman of the Russian Federation committee on the press (apparently B. Mironov—editorial board), reportedly also belong to the group... Those listed above have already held tentative talks with P. Grachev, V. Yerin, and S. Stepashin, and by employing various arguments managed to obtain their agreement not to take countermeasures. In addition, B. Mikhaylov is currently trying to establish contacts with Ye. Primakov's inner circle. A pretext for launching the action should be an address by a prominent public figure or an industrialist on the "Ostankino" first television channel putting forward the initiative in question and giving as reasons the deterioration of the president's health and his physical inability to run the country. To substantiate the argument, a television documentary should be shown portraying the president as a man of poor health and a heavy drinker at that. Then the aforementioned statesmen plan to initiate through their allies at the State Duma the constitutional procedure of handing provisional presidential powers over to V. Chernomyrdin so as to hold emergency presidential elections in the country within the next three months. The chiefs and activists of the Russian Federation Communist Party State Duma faction are aware of the group's plans, and Chernomyrdin's assumption of power suits them, but they are displeased with the presence of Yu. Luzhkov in the group.

According to available reports, the action is scheduled to be carried out in March, the deadline is April of this year. Considered as a preliminary option is the imposition of a state of emergency or some elements of it, possibly on limited territories, under the pretext of the difficult economic situation and the struggle against crime.

The first attempt to start the action was made 10 March—on that day Yu. Skokov was scheduled to made a television address and a corresponding documentary was to be shown. Typically, V. Chernomyrdin himself left on that day for Nizhniy Novgorod and then set out for Finland. P. Grachev was in Germany at the time. The attempt fell through, however, because A. Yakovlev, chief of the "Ostankino" State Television and Radio Company, refused to accord television air time and advised the president's inner circle of the intentions. Immediately afterward, a number of those who were directly or indirectly involved in the action left Moscow: Yu. Skokov for Germany, M. Kolesnikov for France (he will return on 16 March). S. Stepashin was hospitalized.

On that same week when the unsuccessful attempt to depose Boris Yeltsin was made and also during the preceding two or three weeks a whole range of politicians, primarily those in opposition to the president, made statements about the need for Boris Yeltsin to resign one way or another and for early presidential elections to be held... Former British Prime Minister Edward Heath and former U.S. President Richard Nixon have visited Moscow to meet with domestic party leaders in order to figure out the alignment of political forces and plans with regard to future presidential elections.

Despite the initial failure, the group of the aforementioned statesmen have not given up their plans to depose Boris Yeltsin by using an approximately similar plan of action. Currently, talks are under way with R. Vyakhirev, chief of the Gazprom joint-stock company, to persuade him to deliver an address Yu. Skokov failed to make.

Given that, it is noteworthy that P. Grachev has postponed his working visit to the Leningrad Military District, which was scheduled for 14 March. This was done at the eleventh hour, when airplanes with a Defense Ministry delegation and a group of journalists had already left for St. Petersburg... On the whole, the Armed Forces leadership can be divided into two groups: Boris Yeltsin's "loyalists," who have repeatedly expressed their commitment to the incumbent president, including P. Grachev and his first deputy, G. Kondratyev; and the "opposition" represented by General Staff Chief M. Kolesnikov and Deputy Defense Minister A. Kokoshin. According to available information, Deputy Defense Minister A. Kokoshin maintains close ties with O. Soskovets; he regularly does various services to him, his deputies, and relatives. A. Kokoshin and O. Soskovets meet virtually twice or three times a week.

On 15 March, from 1700 to 1800 P. Grachev met with V. Chernomyrdin. The subject of the meeting has not been disclosed. The very fact of its taking place has not been publicized.

What this might mean...

The OBSHCHAYA GAZETA editorial board has asked Aleksandr Yakovlev, chairman of the Federal Television and Radio Service, whether Yuriy Skokov was indeed scheduled to make a television address. Aleksandr Nikolayevich said that Skokov did not approach him in that regard, but there was a "sideways" phone call that warned Yakovlev that such an address was being planned.

Oleg Poptsov, chairman of the All-Russian State Television and Radio Company, has also received a phone call: ARGUMENTY I FAKTY's correspondent asked him to explain why Russian television denied Yuriy Skokov air time.

To all appearances, we are dealing with a clear mystification, an anonymous letter, nothing more. And a fairly rough fabrication at that. The authors' bottom line is only too evident: to compromise a number of the president's closest allies, such as Yuriy Luzhkov, to smear the "power" ministers, to sideline promising politicians by, say, resuscitating "the Skokov threat"—in a word, to plunge into a regular palace intrigue. This should not, however, be dismissed as an innocuous joke. In principle, a coup d'etat or something of the kind may well be organized this way, too: by "warming up" the situation, pitting influential politicians against each other, ratcheting up the psychosis of universal suspiciousness and provoking the authorities into taking inadequate "security measures." This is a technology in the struggle for power. Definitely, a dirty one. But everyone struggles as one can.

Military & Space Issues

Grachev Remarks on Armed Forces Underfunding Viewed

PM1703165994 Moscow TRUD in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 2

[Viktor Badurkin report: "Army on Brink of Poverty"]

[Text] At yesterday's briefing Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev described as critical the situation regarding funding of the army. The amount the state owes to the military department no longer increases by the year but by the month. While it totaled 5 percent of the military budget at the end of 1992, it was 25 percent in December last year, and at the beginning of this year the Defense Ministry received only 63 percent of planned appropriations. This money was scarcely sufficient to pay half the amount owed to suppliers of equipment, arms, and property.

For the first time the Russian defense minister declared that "If the funding situation does not change in the near future, there can be no question not only of reforming the army, providing it with modern weapons and equipment, and a qualitative renewal, but also of ensuring Russia's security."

This—let us say bluntly—sensational statement by the head of the military department was prompted by the fact that the military budget being proposed by the Finance Ministry meets only 46-47 percent of the army and navy's minimum requirements. If it is adopted the Defense Ministry will have to sharply cut (by three-fourths) military orders at defense enterprises, which in turn will lead to the defense sector's final collapse, a fall in industrial production as a whole, and increased unemployment. In addition, what is inevitably the latest wholesale reduction of the armed forces by 400,000 men, which will have a boomerang effect on the army's combat readiness and the state budget (discharging 70,000 servicemen now costs the treasury a trillion rubles), will also lead to an explosion of social tension among the troops.

Further Grachev Comment

BR1803113994 Rome LA REPUBBLICA in Italian 18 Mar 94 p 15

[Fiammetta Cucurnia report on interview with Defense Minister Pavel Grachev by unidentified reporters in Moscow; date not given: "Grachev: Russian Army Loyal to Constitution"]

[Text] Moscow—The reporters examined him carefully, as though trying to read his most hidden thoughts. They considered him the key figure in this Moscow again enveloped in a climate of conspiracies, where there is again talk about troops being on a state of alert and about coups, as there was three years ago and again last summer. But Pavel Grachev, the Russian defense minister, who received his American counterpart William Perry yesterday morning, announcing that "Moscow will be ready by the end of March to join the program of cooperation for peace put forward by NATO," displayed great confidence, made quips, and tried to play matters down. "As long as I am in charge of the Army," he said, "there will be no military dictatorship." According to the general, the real problems facing the Russian Army, heir to the Red Army, are of a different kind—a starvation budget, allocations "entirely insufficient not only for carrying out any reform but even for ensuring Russia's security." And it is only because of this, he said, "that I will struggle."

[LA REPUBBLICA] General Grachev, everyone has been talking about a coup for weeks now. And Zhirinovskiy even went as far as to suggest a date—by the summer. What do you think?

[Grachev] I have heard enough about this business of a coup. We must stop fighting, otherwise soon we will not have anything left to eat. Now is the time to build. But I understand your question. You want to know what the Army would do in the event of a coup. And I will tell you that we are impartial. The Army makes a stand, as you have seen, only if it fears the start of a civil war. It cannot permit that. But as for the rest—protests, disorder, demonstrations, or whatever else—never: There are other bodies that must deal with that.

[LA REPUBBLICA] And yet we often hear it said that amid so much chaos, in order to avert the worst and to try to govern the transitional stage without bloodshed, the possibility of a "government of discipline," with the Army's backing, may not be such a remote one.

[Grachev] I think that the military must do its job and nothing more. It seems to me that absolutely nothing good can be expected if the Army starts leading the economy or agriculture. As long as I am defense minister, there will be no military dictatorships, and we will honor the Constitution.

[LA REPUBBLICA] In the corridors of Parliament there are rumors circulating that Moscow's garrisons have been on a state of alert for several days. What can you tell us in this regard?

[Grachev] That it is nonsense. Around Moscow there are only two major units that can really be placed on a state of alert and used for a military operation. They are the Tamanskaya and the Kantimirovskiya. The other troops are still at the training stage. So it is very easy to check how matters stand.

[LA REPUBBLICA] You said that the Army's real major problem in the present stage is an economic one, which threatens to have serious political developments. Could you explain that to us better?

[Grachev] I will simply tell you that the Finance Ministry has planned an allocation for military expenditures more or less equivalent to 46-47 percent of what we are asking for. I do not want to make any threats, nor do I intend to humiliate myself by begging. At government meetings I put forward concrete figures so that it is clear where such a policy could lead us. Our budget for 1994 was corrected in an attempt to tackle, first, the social problems of 120,000 homeless officers, thousands of people without jobs. This will consume 56 percent of our resources. At the same time, we cannot reduce beyond a certain point cash expenditure on technological and military modernization. But unless the Finance Ministry yields, we will be able to purchase only 25 percent of the weapons planned, which means the collapse of the military industries and an army of unemployed men. Not to mention scientific research. It would be really unfair to level charges of excessive militarization now. We are asking for the minimum. This, because we are now very close to the threshold that cannot be crossed, from the viewpoint of the country's security and of the social problems within the Armed Forces.

[LA REPUBBLICA] General Grachev, you often talk abut the need to have a smaller Army, but one composed of "professionals." However, many people accuse you of being rather slow in implementing this reform. It is as though, after an initial stage of demoralization, Russia were again thinking about a policy of domination.

[Grachev] We no longer need 4-5 million men under arms now. But there is a limit that it is dangerous to exceed when you are concerned about the country's security interests and social problems. This year we made reductions of 200,000, not 400,000, as some would have liked. In general, specialists are agreed that the Russian Army must have at least 1.9 million soldiers. No more, but no less either, keeping in mind our country's special geopolitical situation. At present we have only 120,000 men bound to the Army by contract.

Military Space Forces Launch Cosmos-2274 From Plesetsk

LD1703184094 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1829 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS string correspondent Semen Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—The Russian military space forces launched "Cosmos-2274" satellite with "Soyuz-5" carrier rocket from the Russian cosmodrome in Plesetsk at 19:30 Moscow time on Thursday.

According to the press centre of the military space forces, the launch was successful.

The space apparatus is moving at an orbit close to the estimated [sentence as received]. Its movements are monitored by the main centre for testing and controlling space apparatuses based in Golitsyno-2, a town in the Moscow region. The centre is a structural unit of the Russian military space forces.

"Cosmos-2274" was the 1086th satellite to be launched from the Plesetsk cosmodrome inaugurated 28 years ago.

New Far Eastern Space Port To Have Four Launch Sites

LD1703163494 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1323 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS corespondent Veronika Romanenkova]

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—Although work is just beginning in Russia's new Far Eastern spaceport of Svobodniy, specialists are thinking about its future uses.

According to Aleksey Krysanov, department chief at the General Machine-Building Design Bureau, which is charged with designing the new space port, the feasibility study of the new space centre will be completed before the end of 1994.

The preliminary plans provide for these of first two and then five silos for launching light booster rockets of the Rokot (Rumbler) type and two new launch pads for the lift-off of the heavy Angara-24 boosters.

No huge outlays are required for the first launches of the Rokot missiles—specialists will do with two of the several tens of silos left behind by the military missile division which was disbanded under the START II agreement last autumn after serving the country's defenses since 1968. The silos, measuring more than 20 meters in depth and 4.2 meters across, some equipment and the control room as well as the life-support system were also left intact after the military took away their "toys." Some new equipment has to be installed and launches for peaceful purposes can begin.

Rokot missiles can be launched from the silos. Two launches have already been effected from Baykonur. After some modifications the missiles, earlier used for defence purposes, will lift off light military and civilian satellites.

Aleksey Krysanov stressed that the missile division used to occupy an area of several tens of square kilometers. The new spaceport will need less land. The remainder will be re-cultivated before being returned to civilian authorities.

Prospects for New Station Viewed

LD1803034194 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0200 GMT 18 Mar 94

[Text] Work to create a new Russian space launching ground is beginning at Svobodnyy in Amur Oblast. Specialists are thinking through its prospects. The head of the general machine-building design bureau, (?Aleksey Prusanov), said in an interview with ITAR-TASS that a feasibility study for the entire complex will be ready by the end of 1994. The document will envisage the use of initially two and subsequently five silos for launching light booster rockets, and the creation of two launchpads for heavy booster rockets. A missile division used to be stationed on the site where the cosmodrome is being built. The site will be several times smaller in size after it has been converted for its new purpose. The reclaimed land will be returned to the state.

Cosmodrome To Replace Missile Division

LD1803095794 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0825 GMT 18 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondent Veronika Romanenkova]

[Text] Svobodniy-18 (Amursk region) March 18 TASS—"The state will pay virtually nothing to create the Svobodniy cosmodrome in the Russian Far East," Major-General Aleksandr Venediktov, chief of the main centre for testing and application of space technologies (Svobodniy cosmodrome) said in an interview with ITAR-TASS on Friday.

"There are enough missile silos and infrastructure left by a missile division which operated here, to start space explorations," he added. Besides, many servicemen and missile specialists will remain at the cosmodrome to work, he noted.

Venediktov sees his main task in preparing the cosmodrome for operations and in providing it with adequate equipment.

The reduction of the missile division which was on duty in Svobodniy-18, started in 1992 under the START II Treaty. The last regiment was released from duty here less than a month ago.

The cosmodrome needs twice the number of commissioned officers now, but the new tasks have to be tackled with the present personnel. Venediktov hopes that new specialists will come here, including graduates from the Mozhayskiy Military Space Engineering Academy.

Former ICBM's Used To Launch Satellites

PM1803112994 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 11

[Unattributed report: "Satellite for Mail"]

[Text] Conversion is entering the life of the Russian Plesetsk cosmodrome increasingly widely. The Arkhangelsk Oblast newspaper VOLNA reports that last year regular launches of launch vehicles made on the basis of combat ICBM's. Thus with the aid of the new "Start I" launch vehicle an experimental electronic mail satellite was put into orbit.

In all last year 36 space vehicles were launched from the world's northernmost cosmodrome, only eight of them in the interests of the Defense Ministry. This year's program includes the launch of the new "Koronas" geophysical satellite which will continue the study of the polar aurora in the upper strata of the atmosphere and will begin regular observations of the Sun. And the "Okean" satellite will search for shoals of fish and investigate the ice on Arctic shipping routes.

Economic Issues

Chernomyrdin Outlines Measures To Revive Economy

LD1703172794 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1716 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Igor Galkin]

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—There can no longer be quick and popular solutions in the economy, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said.

In his speech to the Federation Council, the upper house of Russia's new parliament, on Thursday Chernomyrdin said that after steep price rises in January "inflationary processes have slightly slowed down." In February inflation was about ten per cent. In 1993 the number of people living beyond the subsistence level shrank twofold. Presently, there are 25 million such people in Russia.

However, the situation in the country "remains extremely complex on the whole," the premier continued. He blamed this on the continuing production decline which causes stoppages in the work of industrial enterprises. As a result of such stoppages 22 million man-days were lost at 4,000 enterprises in February.

Chernomyrdin believes stoppages are caused by "difficulties in selling finished products." They account for the loss of 58 per cent of working time. One third of losses is caused by the shortage of material resources, six per cent "are connected with the conversion of the defence complex."

He said it would be "premature and inappropriate" to feel elated about the decrease in inflation. The main problems in the economy "are directly connected with non-payments which are the most vivid indicator of the depth and intensity of crisis processes." As of March 1, 1994, "overdue credit debts exceeded 25 trillion roubles. Overdue debit debts totalled about 32 trillion rouble," he said.

There are several factors behind the problem of non-payments, the prime minister explained. Among them he named "debts of CIS republics to the fuel and energy complex," "uncontrolled money movement" and "inability of many heads of industrial enterprises to increase labour productivity." Chernomyrdin stressed the need to "get rid of incapable leaders."

To solve the problem of non-payments, the government has mapped out several measurers, including to pay off the debt for 1993 estimated at 4.6 trillion roubles by the end of March. A new procedure for issuing centralised credits has been introduced. Under the new regulations, they will be issued to end users for targeted payments. There are also plans to introduce soon a mechanism for settling overdue credit debts through finance bills. Additionally, commercial bills will be introduced. Work is underway to prepare documents obliging tax payers to provide information about all of their bank accounts.

"The government is taking measures to begin the process of halting ineffective industries and will actively use bankruptcy proceedings," Chernomyrdin said.

Comments on Proposed Budget Deficit

LD1703180294 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1739 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Igor Galkin]

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—The government presented the State Duma with a draft budget for 1994 providing for a huge deficit of over 60 trillion roubles.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin described it as "hard but realistic," adding that it "sets extremely strict parameters for financing the most vital state needs and programmes." In his speech to the Federation Council, the upper house of Russia's new Parliament, on Thursday he said the government will allocate not more that 183 trillion roubles for this purpose, compared to 240 trillion roubles requested by some industrialists.

The draft allows for a deficit of 62.4 trillion roubles, or nine per cent of the gross domestic product, which is within the limits announced by President Boris Yeltsin in his state-of-the-nation address. The fulfilment of the budget will require additional measures to normalise the financial situation in the country, step up control over tax collection and seek new sources of budget revenues.

Chernomyrdin stressed that the government will no longer put up with violations of tax regulations and tax evasion. "We will consider this as crime against the state," he said.

"To my mind it is totally wrong to speak about the bankruptcy of the state," he emphasised. "The russian state is not bankrupt. It is capable of paying off its debts." However, he pointed out that it is necessary to "somberly realise that we should live according to our means and do not take unfulfillable obligations. Otherwise we risk to plunge ourselves into a new spiral of inflation and stamping out social conflicts."

He said he mentioned this in connection with the continuing wave of strikes in several Russian regions. There can no longer be quick and popular solutions in the economy, the premier said.

The situation in the country "remains extremely complex on the whole," the premier continued. He blamed this on the continuing production decline which causes stoppages in the work of industrial enterprises. As a result of such stoppages, 22 million man-days were lost at 4,000 enterprises in February.

Chernomyrdin believes stoppages are caused by "difficulties in selling finished products." They account for the loss of 58 per cent of working time. One third of losses is caused by the shortage of material resources, six per cent "are connected with the conversion of the defence complex."

He said inflationary processes have slightly slowed down. In february inflation was about ten per cent. In 1993 the number of people living beyond the subsistence level shrank twofold. Presently, there are 25 million such people in Russia. However, the premier warned against self-appeasement, saying it would be "premature and inappropriate" to feel elated about the decrease in inflation. The main problems in the economy "are directly connected with non-payments which are the most vivid indicator of the depth and intensity of crisis processes." As of March 1, 1994, "overdue credit debts exceeded 25 trillion roubles. Overdue debit totalled about 32 trillion rouble," he said.

There are several factors behind the problem of non-payments, the prime minister explained. Among them he named "debts of CIS republics to the fuel and energy complex," "uncontrolled money movement" and "inability of many heads of industrial enterprises to increase labour productivity." Chernomyrdin stressed the need to "get rid of incapable leaders."

To solve the problem of non-payments, the government has mapped out several measurers, including paying off the debt for 1993 estimated at 4.6 trillion roubles by the end of March. A new procedure for issuing centralised credits has been introduced. Under the new regulations, they will be issued to end users for targeted payments. There are also plans to introduce soon a mechanism for settling overdue credit debts through finance bills. Additionally, commercial bills will be introduced. Work is underway to prepare documents obliging tax payers to provide information about all of their bank accounts.

"The government is taking measures to begin the process of halting ineffective industries and will actively use bankruptcy proceedings," Chernomyrdin said.

Pensions To Increase in Line With Growth in Prices

LD1703141794 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0915 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow, 17 Mar—In the first six months of 1994 it is envisaged that a form of compensation should be retained by increasing pensions in line with the growth in consumer prices. From 1 February compensation to pensioners is to be increased from 11,700 rubles to 20,000 rubles and from 1 May to 29,600 rubles. This was reported today at a session of the Russian Federation Government Presidium by Vasiliy Barchuk, chairman of the board of Russia's pension fund, during an examination of the draft budget of the fund for the first six months of 1994.

He explained that the fund's draft budget presupposes that its income amounts to almost 17 trillion rubles, and its expenditure to approximately 16 trillion rubles. Of the budget's income, 16.1 trillion rubles derive from insurance contributions from employers and citizens, and 784 billion rubles come from the republican budget.

In his speech Vasiliy Barchuk drew attention to the "need to ensure the timely payment of state pensions, otherwise we will have serious social conflicts."

In this connection Viktor Chernomyrdin stated that "the government cannot allow pension payments to be overdue; we have to act in a precise manner here." The chairman of the government has warned leaders of the regions which delay payments to the pension fund that this practice is inadmissible. At the suggestion of Viktor Chernomyrdin, the draft budget of the Russian Federation pension fund for the first six months of 1994 was approved as a whole by the presidium of the government.

'Question Mark' Remains Over Budget Totals

PM1703160194 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 2

[Irina Savvateyeva article: "The Government Will Not Be Able to Unravel the Budget"]

[Text] Yesterday the Russian government discussed the budget for the third day running. The "budget sitting" was still not over by the time this article was being prepared for publication. The only thing that was clear was that ratification of the estimate of state revenue and expenditure was making slow headway.

One of the key questions is what the revenue figure will be. The Finance Ministry insists that a figure of 120.7 trillion rubles [R] is perfectly realistic. Chernomyrdin, however, is demanding detailed validation. The point is that numerous critics have repeatedly questioned the figure.

The sum of R120.7 trillion is 16.6 percent of GDP. Last year's revenue of R17.2 trillion represented only 10.6 percent of GDP. If you bear in mind that financial discipline has not become much stricter, it should be recognized that the difference is substantial. However, the Finance Ministry argues that such a straight comparison is inappropriate, as the procedure for calculating revenue and expenditure has been somewhat modified this year (in particular tied credit, investment-related credit, will now go through the budget—which was not formerly the case). Thus, under comparable conditions R120.7 trillion now represents, according to the Finance Ministry's calculations, not 16.6 percent of GDP but only 11.1 percent.

So you can argue about the figure, but there is nevertheless a proposed growth in revenue in the 1994 draft budget compared with last year's budget. How will this be achieved? The Finance Ministry cites the following additional sources: revenue from foreign economic activity, the procedure for calculating which will now be changed; an increase in the federal tax on profits; the introduction of a federal income tax on the population (previously all 12 percent of it went into local budgets, whereas 1 percent will now be paid into the federal treasury); and—the final additional source of revenue—new kinds of excise duty. They will be enumerated in a special government decree.

However, it is not just revenue which generates questions. A serious polemic is also developing over expenditure items.

There is very intensive discussion under way on the financing of the military-industrial complex. After two days of discussion defense industry spokesmen failed to find a common language with the Finance Ministry.

No final decision has been made on investment expenditure either. The Finance Ministry considers that 53 trillion is the maximum that the budget can bear. The Economy Ministry, however, steadfastly insists that this is not enough to support production.

The financing of the mass media is another painful problem. The Finance Ministry has agreed in general terms to provide subsidies; however, they are far more modest than those the mass media were counting on. As is well known, payments for communications services devour the lion's share of these subsidies, and communications charges went up by a factor of 2.5 in January. The communications workers put this leap down to the twofold increase in charges for electricity. It appears that the government is inclined to think that the power workers "have gone too far." At least the Commission for Operational Management, headed by First Vice Premier Oleg Soskovets, insists that is the case. And now the issue of subsidies to the mass media is linked with the problems of the power workers.

So after two days of discussion in government a large question mark still hangs over the revenue and expenditure figures and the size of the budget deficit.

Paper Eyes 'Economic State of Emergency' Claims

PM1703161394 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 1

[Report by Valeriy Vyzhutovich: "President Has Left for Sochi 'To Think About the Reforms,' Whereas in

Moscow They Have Started Talking About Introducing a State of Economic Emergency"]

[Text] At Tuesday's session of the Federation Council, Speaker Vladimir Shumeyko caused a sensation with the announcement that the Russian parliament will shortly adopt a law on a state of emergency in the economy. However, in a "Vesti" television program interview the very same day the Federation Council chairman stated that he was merely referring to the need to take immediate and extremely prompt action within the financial and economic spheres. This alone and nothing more.

For the second time in a row in recent days Vladimir Shumeyko has made some stunning statements. On a visit to Kaliningrad last week the speaker of the upper chamber announced that the government is preparing a decision on a 50-percent across-the-board tax cut. "Nothing of the sort is planned," Deputy Finance Minister Sergey Aleksashenko stated in an interview with IZVESTIYA, delicately suggesting that Shumeyko's interpretation of the president's wish to alleviate the tax burden as expressed in his message to parliament seemed somewhat free.

And now society is yet again being invited to unravel the remarks of a politician whose public status obliges him to use precise and unambiguous phrases.

However, are we simply talking about linguistic sloppiness here, the kind that gives rise to free interpretations? In an interview with INTERFAX, Duma Speaker Ivan Rybkin announced that the day before Vladimir Shumeyko did in fact discuss with him the possibility of adopting a law on a state of economic emergency. Moreover, Rybkin claims that Viktor Chernomyrdin also took part in the discussion of this matter, which took place late in the evening of 14 March. "The three of us discussed which was the best of three possible options for approving the second-quarter budget. How should we approve it: By a special law, by suspending various articles of the law in a state of emergency regime, or by continuing to work normally, in which case we would need at least two or three months to approve the budget." Ivan Rybkin declined to say which of the three options he had listed seemed to be the most expedient.

Meanwhile nobody has yet officially dismissed the specter of economic state of emergency conjured up by the remarks—be they careless or cunning—of two leading politicians. And we can only guess what form it will take. Perhaps, following the Belorussian [Belarusian] example, we will witness the confiscation of enterprises' foreign currency funds, resolute cessation of auctions at the Interbank Foreign Currency Exchange, the imposition of a fixed ruble exchange rate, and the nationalization of a significant proportion of assets belonging to commercial structures? It cannot be permitted for a government, even a government that is as closed to the press as the present one, to keep society in a state of ignorance regarding such intentions. If it harbors no such intentions, then it ought to announce this fact officially and extremely clearly.

But yet again we are in a complete fog. Ivan Rybkin has just refuted press reports of his conversation with Shumeyko and Chernomyrdin. "I have never had occasion to hold talks on this topic with anyone," the speaker stated at a plenary session of the Duma in reply to a deputy's question.

On the same day Aleksandr Livshits, leader of the group of economic experts affiliated to the Russian president, circulated a statement saying that "at the present time he sees no need for the highest organs of the country's state power to adopt any emergency measures regarding the economy."

...As he left for a vacation in Sochi Boris Yeltsin announced that while he is on leave he intends to get down to formulating a mechanism for implementing his message to parliament. Could it be that the government, supported by the parliamentary speakers and wishing to spare the president this concern of state during his leave, has already set about formulating such a mechanism by introducing a state of economic emergency? Or will the explanation that once again we have misinterpreted somebody be forthcoming tomorrow?

Federal Assembly

State Duma Holds Hearings on Partnership for Peace

Lukin Against Joining

LD1703115594 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 0900 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] The State Duma is holding hearings into the Partnership for Peace program today.

[Correspondent Dmitriy Vinsker] Representatives of the foreign and defense ministries who spoke at the hearings insisted on the need for Russia to join in this program. In their opinion, Russia outside the Partnership for Peace program will be on the path of self-isolation, but if Russia joins it can develop the program in ways which are necessary for Moscow.

Vladimir Lukin, chairman of the Duma's International Committee, spoke against joining. According to him the idea of the program is good but, in his words, the devil is hidden in the details, and these details, as Lukin stressed, incidentally just like the positive and negative sides of the program, are insufficiently thought through. It is worth noting that Vladimir Lukin's stance is shared, to a lesser or greater degree, by virtually all the deputies of the lower chamber.

Dmitriy Vinsker, Ekho Moskvy, the State Duma.

Officials Support Program

LD1703153494 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1125 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Russia's refusal to join NATO's Partnership for Peace program will strengthen the positions of supporters of NATO's expansion, while Russia will lose an opportunity to influence this program, head of a Security Council department Yuriy Nazarkin told the State Duma.

He is convinced that the positive aspects of this program and NATO's potential should be used for creating a European collective security system, for strengthening the CSCE and for broadening cooperation in peacemaking and military conversion.

Nazarkin was supported by head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Department for European Cooperation Yuriy Ushakov, who said that Russia's isolation from NATO's initiative will deprive it of the opportunity to influence the implementation of the Partnership or Peace program, and NATO's cooperation with Eastern European and CIS countries.

Ushakov believes that Russia will also sustain considerable financial losses, because it will lose its Eastern European arms markets which will "completely pass over to NATO after the Eastern European countries join this program." As we reported earlier, this program envisages a standardization of armaments.

To quote Ushakov, Russia's participation in the NATO program does not exclude protection of its national interests.

Chairman of the State Duma's Committee for International Affairs, Russia's former ambassador to the U.S. Vladimir Lukin thinks, however, that Moscow should not join this program hastily because, he said, "we have already missed the most appropriate moment for doing so."

In his opinion, since the U.S. is ready to broaden relations with Russia, instead of "pushing its way to the head of the line" Russia should analyze what should be done for a more active rapprochement with this organization and closely follow its reorganization.

Committee Wants 'Special Terms' for Russia

LD1703154794 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1417 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] If Russia joins NATO's Partnership for Peace [PFP] program this should be carried out on special terms given "its status of a nuclear power which possesses a mighty potential." This conclusion was drawn by the participants of the parliamentary hearings on the Partnership for Peace program held in the State Duma on Wednesday, Chairman of the Defense Committee of the parliament's lower chamber Sergey Yushenkov (Russia's Choice bloc) reported in his interview with Interfax.

In his words, at the hearings it was recommended to join the program and to consider NATO's program "as the beginning of the path towards the creation of a common security system." The State Duma was recommended to hear information by Russian Foreign Minister's spokesmen, Defense Minister, and secretary of the Russian Federation Security Council at one of the nearest "governmental hours."

During the discussions in the State Duma on Thursday, Major General Pavel Zolotaryov, representative of the Russian Defense Ministry, expressed his support to the idea to join NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

Zolotaryov underlined that the Defense Ministry understands that this program "is one of the concrete trends in NATO's strategy" aimed at detention by means of cooperation rather than using deterrents.

According to his estimate, if Russia refuses to join this program it will occupy "a self-isolating position of an alien supervisor over processes going on in Europe" and it "will be less listened to."

Zolotaryov pointed out that Russia should demonstrate its political will and resoluteness to actively participate in the new system of collective security and creation of an efficient military mechanism to deter wars and conflicts. It is also necessary to push for the development of common approaches by Russia and NATO to the problems of military security and strategic stability; and for the recognition by NATO of Russia's special role in supporting stability on the CIS territory.

Duma Hearings, Lukin Cited on Estonian Border Debate

MK1803104094 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 18 Mar 94 p 4

[Aleksandr Koretskiy report: "Russo-Estonian Border Problems. Tallinn's Arguments Prove Unconvincing for Moscow"]

[Text] Estonia's territorial claims on Russia formed the topic of yesterday's hearings in the Duma. An active pressure being put by the Estonian side of late on the residents and local authorities of Pskov and Novgorod Oblasts (free distribution of Estonian citizenship, issue of Estonian passports and real estate privatization certificates on Russian territory) has run against Moscow's harsh reaction, something unexpected by Tallinn. Not only representatives of Russia's state power in these oblasts, but also all the power structures have received instructions to cut short, using all legal means, "Estonian provocations." Simultaneously, the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Federal Border Service have produced a draft government decision to tighten checkpoint rules along the Estonian border. The emergence of this document came as an unpleasant surprise for Estonian representatives attending the hearings.

In the view of Vladimir Lukin, head of the Duma International Affairs Committee, having signed on 12 January 1991 a treaty with Russia on the principles of interstate relations, Estonia virtually recognized the absence on its part of territorial claims (in Article 6, the sides recognize each other's territorial integrity and territorial sovereignty). Because of this alone, references to the Tartu Peace Treaty signed in 1920 have no legal force. The very progress of talks that terminated in the signing of this treaty attested to the Estonian side's intention to get from Russia as much as possible in solving the state border problem. (The talks were frequently interrupted by Tallinn while Estonian troops, which had resumed military actions, were moving deeper into Russian territory).

Besides, in the opinion of the Russian side, having become part of the USSR in 1940, Estonia lost its status as an international law entity. Hence, there exist at least two reasons for which Tallinn's territorial claims (incidentally, they studiously avoid this term in Estonia) today are unfounded. Tallinn's representatives at the hearings, naturally, disagreed which such a solution of the border question. In their opinion, Article 2 of the Tartu Treaty is in effect even today; that is, the border should run across the present territory of Pskov Oblast. Russia intends to dot the "i's" by toughening the border area rules and strictly indicating the position of border checkpoints. Russia will draw the final border "on location" even if Estonia declines to take part in this process.

Duma Gives First Approval to Law on Peacekeeping Role

MK1703134094 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 2

[Yelena Tregubova report under the "Project" rubric: "State Duma Deputies Intend To Legitimize 'Russia's Peacemaker Activities'"]

[Text] Yesterday, the State Duma passed in the first reading a draft federal law "On the Procedure for the Provision of Russian Federation Military and Civilian Personnel for the Participation in Operations to Maintain or Restore International Peace and Security, and in Other Types of Peacekeeping Activities."

According to Defense Committee figures, at the moment, one Russian battalion of 1,200 men is on the territory of Yugoslavia, four battalions numbering 1,778 men are in Moldova, one regiment of 503 men is in Georgia, and one division of 5,982 men is in Tajikistan. In addition to these military formations, according to committee chairman Sergey Yushenkov, 87 Russian military observers are taking part in UN peacekeeping operations. Georgiy Kondratyev, Russian Federation deputy defense minister, told parliamentarians yesterday, however, that 16,500 Russian soldiers are present in the so-called "hot spots" today. Interestingly, General Kondratyev urged that on no account "a limit be set" on the permitted participation of Russian Federation servicemen in such actions.

The presenters of official reports agreed that "peacekeeping forces" should be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of Russia's Armed Forces and subordinated to the Ministry for Emergency Situations.

It was decided to forward the draft federal law to the president, the deputy factions, the groups and commissions "for the preparation of proposals and remarks."

Duma Refuses To Discuss Abolishing CIS

LD1803084894 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0830 GMT 18 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS Parliamentary correspondent Ivan Novikov]

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—The Russian State Duma refused on Friday to discuss the cancellation of the agreement instituting the Commonwealth of Independent States which was signed by the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus in 1991 and which actually signalled the collapse of the former Soviet Union.

The proposal was submitted by Anatoliy Lukyanov, former speaker of the Soviet parliament, who faced trial as an organiser of the 1991 coup which resulted in the Soviet collapse, but was amnestied by the Duma.

Lukyanov is now a member of the "Russian Way" group in the Duma.

Duma Factions Ready To Draft Memorandum of Accord

LD1703155494 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1155 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS news analyst Lyudmila Aleksandrova]

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—Members of many parliamentary factions and parties represented in the State Duma are ready to work on a memorandum on civic peace and accord suggested by the Russian president. However, they have different notions of a document and different views on its importance. This is shown by in interview given to ITAR-TASS by representatives of parties in the lobbies of the lower chamber of parliament.

Gennadiy Burbulis, member of the parliamentary faction of Russia's Choice party described the president's proposal as absolutely neccessary and very promising. "Whatever interests are pursued by those who are ready to participate in this process, the idea of civic peace and national accord is highly relevant to Russia," Burbulis said. He added that he will be assisting the president so that this idea be implemented convincingly.

Valentin Kuptsov, a leader of the Communist Party of Russia, said the party is ready to take part in drafting the document. He said it should be based on a memorandum on civic peace and accord adopted by the State Duma in a package with documents on amnesty. "The memorandum should be carefully drawn up and the method of its implementation should be considered," he added.

Leader of the Agrarian Party Mikhail Lapshin said the party will be involved in drafting the document, but it will raise many questions, including those regarding the revival of the Russian village, and will be watching closely that accord should not lead to the suppression of part of society.

Anatoliy Sliva, representative of the Party of Russian Unity and Accord, expressed extreme perplexity over the fact that the party which, according to him, suggested the memorandum on accord to the Duma has not been invited to participate in the work on the document proposed by the president. But then, it is inessential who has come up with the idea. The point of the matter is that there is much speculation on this idea. He believes the idea of civic peace should be down-to-earth and should by implemented in specific deads.

Nikolay Travkin, leader of the Democratic Party of Russia, believes that civic accord in society is indispensible, but he sees the road to it not in any one document, no matter how exhaustive and with how many parties, its signatories, but in achieving accord between the two branches of power—executive and legislative.

The opposition takes a radical stand on the matter. This was the spirit of statements of Aleksandr Nevzorov and Sergey Baburin, representatives of the "Russian Path" national patriotic group, that has not yet been registered. The former dismissed the memorandum's idea as "hypocricy." The latter said that for the president "this is not a memorandum of accord but a memorandum of humility."

Duma Infighting Over Yeltsin Message Decree Viewed

PM1803104594 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 1

[Vladimir Yermolin report: "'Who Is Guilty?' and 'What Is To Be Done?'—These Are Questions Which Continue To Torment the State Duma in Connection With the Discussion of the Russian Federation President's Message"]

[Text] The State Duma's draft decree on the Russian Federation president's message is once again being returned to the working group for additional work to be done. Not one of the versions proposed Wednesday morning was passed. In fact, two approaches were considered: The first included a political assessment of the situation which has taken shape in the country and which was noted in the president's message itself; the second without a political preamble, consisted exclusively of the decree section which speaks of proposals to the Russian Federation Government for overcoming the socioeconomic crisis in the country and of the Duma's plans in the same area. The first version was insisted on by the Communists, the Agrarians, "New Regional Policy," and the "Russian Path" deputies' group. The second version was insisted on by "Russia's Choice" and the Party of Russian Unity and Accord.

The distribution of votes which has taken shape in all the principal ballots is such that none of the sides can count on a "clear victory." But preliminary accords are still proliferating in the sessions.

It is, in general, not difficult to calculate why. The political preamble is essentially perceived as an "indictment" of those who have supported and implemented the reforms in Russia over the past two years. It is also clear that "Russia's Choice" will never agree to the prospect of the revival of "state management of a mixed economy."

If we read through both texts carefully, then, with the exception of the aforementioned preamble, we will not find many differences between them. Except that there is an appendix to the "political" version with an approximate list of laws of paramount state importance. Among the 22 draft laws the law "On State Policy in the Sphere of Defense and the Country's Security" is placed seventh in terms of significance.

The litigant sides will most likely have to make a compromise in the very near future. If only because the document itself—the decree on the Russian Federation president's message—will hardly be of great applied significance. The deputies themselves said as much. It turns out that the lower chamber of the Federal Assembly is still continuing to expend its energy on exclusively political debates and is not able to switch to a concrete list of the laws which the country is awaiting with enviable patience.

Duma Refuses To Hear Address by Former Prosecutor

PM1703143594 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Mar 94 First Edition p 2

[Unattributed report: "Duma Reluctant To Listen to Ex-Prosecutor"]

[Text] The State Duma has no intention of hearing Aleksey Kazannik's reasons for resigning as Russian gerneral prosecutor. Deputies Aleksandr Nevzorov and Sergey Baburin pressed for this information. At yesterday's plenary session the lower parliamentary chamber rejected their suggestion that the question of Aleksey Kazannik's resignation be included on the agenda.

Federation Council Suggests Yeltsin Nominate New Prosecutor

LD1703172494 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1718 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Anna Melnikova]

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—The Russian Parliament's upper house, the Federation Council, suggests that President Boris Yeltain should inform the chamber within a week about the resignation of Aleksey Kazannik and present a new nominee for the post of Russia's prosecutor general, the Federation Council said in a resolution passed on Thursday after two-day debates over the issue of the prosecutor general.

Federation Council Hearings on State of Emergency

LD1703154294 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1406 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Anna Melnikova]

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—The Russian Parliament's upper house, the Federation Council, decided to continue hearings on the situation in the zone under state of emergency rule in North Ossetia and Ingushetia, House Speaker Vladimir Shumeyko told reporters after the Federation Council's closed-door meeting. According to him, "the conflict between the Republics of North Ossetia and Ingushetia is extremely acute, since one of the main human rights, the right to live, is being violated".

Shumeyko reported that lawmakers instructed the Federation Council chairman to set up a special commission for further investigation into this issue. After this, the commission is to submit its proposals for the president's consideration. Lawmakers think it necessary to hold an enlarged meeting of the Security Council with the participation of the special commission so that the next meeting of the upper house could pass the final decision.

The Federation Council chairman emphasised that this mechanism of decision-making was the most expedient. In his opinion, many decisions have been taken earlier, but all of them were never implemented. Therefore, Shumeyko stressed, "it is critical that all the three branches of power (the Federation Council, the president and the government) discuss this issue and make a joint decision".

The upper house speaker also told reporters that deputies adopted at their meeting an appeal to the peoples of Ingushetia and North Ossetia. The document stresses the need "to lay down arms and solve the problems piled over many years by peaceful means".

Federation Council To Ratify 100 Treaties

LD1703155794 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1306 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Anna Melnikova]

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—The Federation Council is to ratify some 100 international treaties, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Boris Pastukhov said at a session of the upper chamber of the Russian parliament. About 40 of them are of a priority importance. The legislators will adopt a ratification law on each treaty.

Speaking about the ratification of the treaty between Russia and Georgia on friendship, cooperation and good neighbourly relations, Pastukhov called attention to article 33, which says that "the treaty shall be subject to ratification and shall become effective after the exchange of ratification instruments of the two countries." He pointed out that President Yeltsin had stressed before signing the treaty that "its ratification is possible only after obvious headway is made in the settlement of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict."

According to Pastukhov, now the Russian Foreign Ministry and Defence Ministry are unanimous in their opinion that "not a single cartridge should be turned over to the Georgian side, not even for the needs of the Georgian Interior Ministry." He stressed the need for a closer cooperation between members of the Federation Council and the Foreign Ministry.

The Federation Council adopted today draft regulations on the parliamentary group of the Federal Assembly. According to Speaker of the Federation Council Vladimir Shumeyko, the parliamentary group of the Federal Assembly will be made up of members of the State Duma and the Federation Council in order to represent the Russian parliament in international organisations. Aside from it, the Federation Council adopted a resolution on the creation of a hospitality fund.

The legislators adopted a resolution on the amount of monthly remuneration for members of the Federation Council holding elective posts. According to the resolution, 299,000 roubles will be added to their monthly salaries, equal to those of ministers, and to other privileges. According to Shumeyko, "the rise in wages is intended for members of Federation Council committees working on a full-time basis, as well as for deputies to the Federation Council to cover travelling expenses."

Regional Affairs

Grachev Arrives in Kaliningrad; To Set Up Defense Force

LD1703162394 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1549 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Valeriy Biryukov]

[Text] Kaliningrad, 17 Mar—"I am in Kaliningrad Oblast to resolve the issue of setting up a limited operational group made up from the forces of the Baltic Fleet and from the land-based forces." This was stated today by Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev on arrival in Kaliningrad. He has begun a three-day tour of inspection of the country's westernmost oblast.

According to the minister, the numerical strength of the group that is being set up "will be determined by the defensive sufficiency necessary to protect this enclave territory and also Russia's interests in the Baltic region." "The final decision on setting up the group and its deployment will be made by a Defense Ministry collegium," Pavel Grachev stressed.

Outlines Plans for 'Defense Area'

LD1703213594 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2109 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Valeriy Biryukov and Vadim Byrkin]

[Text] Kaliningrad March 18 TASS—Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev announced on Thursday night an intention to create a special defence area in Russia's most western Kaliningrad region on the basis of the Baltic Fleet units and the 11th Guards Army stationed here. The minister came here on Thursday afternoon to discuss the issue with the region's military officers.

"The Kaliningrad region is different from all other Russian regions because of its geographic and enclave position", Grachev noted. "And the mobile grouping to be formed here is designed to ensure reliable protection of this territory against military threats from both the sea and land", he stressed. However, there will be no sweeping reductions in the officers' corps, the minister promised, therefore there are no grounds for concern.

Grachev informed officers about the progress of military reform. He also reported that some 20 new laws on armed forces were being drafted at the moment, "since many provisions of the laws passed by the former Supreme Soviet do no meet the Army's interests". Among the most important laws, the minister cited those on martial law, on military police, on courts martial.

The defence minister answered questions from the audience. After the meeting, well-known variety actors, who came from Moscow together with Grachev, gave a performance.

Further Reportage on Vladivostok Mayor

Tolstoshein Takes Control

OW1703120394 Vladivostok Radiostantsiya Tikhiy Okean Maritime Network in Russian 0815 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Report by unidentified reporter; from the "Pacific Ocean" program]

[Text] Acting upon a ruling confirmed by the Maritime Kray prosecutor, the Maritime Kray administration removed Viktor Ivanovich Cherepkov, head of Vladivostok city administration, for the duration of preliminary investigation of criminal file No. 474-731. The Maritime Kray court endorses the application of this criminal procedural measure. Viktor Ivanovich Cherepkov is charged with accepting extensive bribes from citizen Volkov. Kray administration decree No. 108, issued on 16 March, nominated Konstantin Borisovich Tolstoshein as the acting head of Vladivostok city administration for the duration of criminal investigation of Viktor Cherepkov. When a Maritime Radio correspondent asked Tolstoshein where he would begin, this is what he said.

[Tolstoshein] We are taking all the necessary measures so as to attend not to politics but to practical matters, to the most serious questions of survival of the city of Vladivostok. In this connection, I issued a decree nominating my deputies at 2000 hours yesterday [1000 GMT 16 March]. I have also issued a statement on reorganization of the structure of the city administration, and on nomination of heads of rayon administrations. When we gathered, we all reached a consensus: The first task of the Vladivostok city authorities is to begin cleaning up the city immediately, beginning tomorrow. To be more precise, it is already night time, so the cleaning will begin today. [sentence as heard]

Our second task: I believe that we should pay the utmost attention to transportation problems, which includes buses, trolley buses, and trams, and of course the railroad. The dacha season will begin very soon, and it will simply not do if the trains do not run. They are very expensive, but how will the pensioners and people who do not have their own transportation commute to their dachas? Therefore we all think that this is one of the main problems. We plan to open as many stores as necessary for the handicapped, World War II veterans, victims of Chernobyl, and veterans of Afghanistan. Therefore, the emphasis will be on people. We have agreed that the dominant factor in our work will be the person. Naturally, one of the most important questions in our activities from the very beginning will be the issue of preparing for the winter of 1994-1995. We are beginning our work, and we call all residents of Vladivostok to respond to our requests. We call on all leaders of enterprises, commercial structures and the various forms of property: Let us all drop confrontation, political intrigue, and other activities that do not grace either us or our life. Let us make Vladivostok a city which will be pleasant to come to, which will be pleasant for our relatives or foreigners—it does not matter who—to come to. We must tidy our city up, improve its appearance. After all, we have to live in this city.

[Reporter] Konstantin Borisovich, it is 0300 in the night [1700 GMT] now. Is it necessary for you to be here?

[Tolstoshein] Of course it is. We started serious work from the very first minutes. I have already told you that we are trying to solve the problems of reducing the city administration. The city administration has been bloated out of all proportion, and understandably, this has consequences: Every person working here gets a salary, and a fairly large one. However, I have to tell you that three people are responsible for the same sphere of activity, and only their job titles are different. And each of them gets a pretty wild salary. We are sitting here working on this problem this very moment. I have to tell the city residents that probably the staff bloated by the previous administration could not handle its job because there were too many people harnessed to specific jobs. We are going to review all of this. In our administration, each person will earn his pay by being responsible for a concrete sphere of activity.

[Reporter] If this is not a military secret, could you tell us who will head the rayon administrations? I think that everyone is concerned about this.

[Tolstoshein] Of course this is not a secret. I signed a decree nominating the heads of rayon administrations yesterday at 2000 hours. Pervomayskiy Rayon: Viktor Gennadiyevich Pletnev; Leninskiy Rayon: Sergey Semenovich Zhurmilov; Frunzenskiy Rayon: Viktor Andreyevich Goncharov; Pervorechenskiy Rayon: Aleksandr Vladimirovich Avdeyev; and Tamara Borisovna Vadilyeva will be the acting head of Sovetskiy Rayon. We shall see what happens next. [end recording]

Militia Seizes Administration Building

LD1703115794 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1100 GMT 17 Mar 94

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] The events in Vladivostok have squeezed news from Moscow into the background. Igor Lebedinets, deputy head of the Vladivostok administration, reported that an armed group of people had seized the city administration building.

According to Reuter, the group consists of 50 members of the Special Purpose Militia Detachments [OMON]. Viktor Cherepkov, head of the Vladivostok administration, is now in the building. He is a sick man, having had a heart attack.

There is, practically, no legitimate authority in the town. Lebedinets, deputy head of administration, has asked the Russian president and the head of government to take urgent measures.

[Begin video report by M. Velikoselskiy and A. Savelev] Viktor Cherepkov, the mayor of Vladivostok, was forcibly removed from office in the early hours of 17 March by the Kray administration, using the militia forces. The mayor's office is blocked by the OMON, and our Vesti team was not allowed into the building. (Veniyamin Chichayev), senior assistant of the kray procurator, said the mayor had been removed in connection with bribery charges and failing to attend a hearing. The kray court gave its consent, because Cherepkov is standing as a candidate to the kray duma.

According to eyewitnesses, the mayor, who was elected by the town people and who suffers from a heart complaint, was carried out of the mayor's office, while Vladimir Gilginberg, in charge of the city's affairs, was thrown out by force.

[Begin Gilginberg voice recording] I was chucked out. About five militiamen, sergeants, I think, grabbed me by my hands and legs and threw me out, throwing my jacket and hat out after me, into the bargain. [end recording]

Konstantin Tolstoshein has been appointed acting mayor. Cherepkov got significantly more votes than he did during the elections. In the meantime, it came out that on the eve of the operation, the city's hospitals had received an urgent instruction to prepare beds for the wounded as a result of a possible Kamchatka earthquake. Both Kamchatka authorities and the hydrometeorological service categorically denied today that a cataclysm could occur over the next few days. Cherepkov's supporters are picketing the mayor's office and the removed mayor has gone on a hunger strike. [end video report]

[Announcer] Nonetheless, Igor Lebedinets denied rumours that Viktor Cherepkov's removal gave rise to indignation among the people of Vladivostok. On the contrary, he told an Interfax correspondent, it made the town dwellers breathe easy again. When I presented Konstantin Tolstoshein, who will be the town's acting mayor, to the public, people applauded, added Lebedinets.

Filatov Says Order 'Being Restored'

LD1703125794 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1221 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—Head of the Presidential Staff Sergey Filatov called to refrain from whipping up tensions in connection with the toppling of the mayor of Vladivostok in the Far East and compared him to anti-Yeltsin rebels who had barricaded themselves in the parliament building in Moscow last October after the president had dissolved the former legislature.

Filatov told TASS on Thursday that the decision to dismiss Viktor Cherepkov was adopted after the local prosecutor's office initiated criminal proceedings against him on charges of corruption. However, the mayor refused to show up for interrogations and preferred to barricade himself in his office and "attracted armed people to his side", he said.

"It looks as if the example of rebels from the 'White House' in Moscow, who provoked bloodshed in the capital last October, was borrowed by Cherepkov and his supporters", Filatov said, adding that the sacked mayor tried to "win political dividends" from the criminal case.

Filatov quoted law enforcement agencies in Vladivostok as saying that Cherepkov is accused of taking huge bribes. Prosecutors in Vladivostok said he could not remain the mayor as the position allowed him to exert pressure on subordinates forcing them to destroy discrediting documents.

Filatov also quoted Interior Minister Viktor Yerin as telling him that "an operation to unblock the mayor's office and avert disorders" had been carried out in Vladivostok.

Cherepkov left the office by 11.00 hours GMT (21.00 local time) and Filatov said public order in the city was being restored.

Konstantin Tolstosheyn was appointed acting mayor.

Official Says Reports of Riots Untrue

LD1703184494 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1714 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] The officer on duty in the Primorskoye Territory Interior Department told Interfax that the media reports of riots provoked in Vladivostok by the removal of mayor Viktor Cherepkov for bribe taking were untrue.

The officer also said that no gunmen had taken over the mayor's office Thursday. Cherepkov and his deputy had been evicted from the mayor's office Wednesday.

The officer said that as few as twenty, mostly elderly, supporters of Cherepkov, had been outside the city administration office in the early hours of Thursday.

Igor Lebedinets, deputy head of the territorial administration, told Interfax that the former mayor's supporters exaggerated the importance of the event.

An officer on duty in the Federal Counterintelligence Service said that the police, and not his agency, were handling the case.

The official representative of the territory in Moscow told Interfax that the situation in Vladivostok was quiet and Cherepkov had been removed from the mayor's office the day before.

Cherepkov could not be reached by phone. The territory representative said that Cherepkov had changed his telephone number on several occasions during his tenure of office. Now he probably simply did not want to lift the receiver. The official said that the exact whereabouts of Cherepkov were unknown. He had not been arrested but had been told not to leave the city.

Public Prosecutor Begins Investigating Mayor

LD1703165294 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1630 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—Acting Russian Public Prosecutor Aleksey Ilyushenko ordered one of his senior investigators on Thursday to probe into the case of Vladivostok Mayor Viktor Cherepkov accused of bribe-taking, the press centre of the public prosecutor's office said.

Criminal proceedings against Cherepkov were instituted in February 1994 on charges of bribery.

The decision followed the second day of unrest in the city. On Wednesday, armed riot police stormed the mayor's office and told Cherepkov and his closest aides they were dismissed from office. First Deputy Mayor Vladimir Gilgenberg, who put up resistance, was literally carried out from the building by police.

This was the second armed invasion of the city administration building. The first one occurred on the night of February 13, and was prompted, according to an official version, by the need to question Cherepkov on receiving a bribe from a certain Volkov. The mayor then remained at power thanks to public support.

Supporters of the toppled mayor, including a group of voters who nominated him to the regional council, have announced that Cherepkov's toppling was an act of open arbitrariness and a gross violation of human rights. They said they would hold acts of protest, including hunger strikes at the regional administration headquarters.

Official Says Public Welcomes Mayor's Dismissal

LD1703133494 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1125 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Deputy Head of the Maritime Territorial Administration Igor Lebedinets has denied rumors that the dismissal of Vladivostok Mayor Viktor Cherepkov aroused general protest in the city. On the contrary, the population of Vladivostok sighed with relief, he told Interfax on Thursday.

"The public welcomed with applause the news that the mayor's duties will be performed by Konstantin Tolstoshein," he said.

Viktor Cherepkov was removed from office on Wednesday on charges of bribe-taking.

According to Interfax sources, the police had to use force to oust Cherepkov from his office. To quote Lebedintsev, policemen virtually carried him out of city hall.

Legal action was started against the city administration more than a month ago. The investigators believe that they have collected enough evidence for accusing Cherepkov of bribe-taking.

The Maritime Territorial Administration has appointed Konstantin Tolstoshein, the former head of the Pervorechensk Regional Administration (the Vladivostok Region) to the post of acting mayof of Vladivostok.

For health reasons Cherepkov has not been questioned yet as a defendant.

Tolstoshein, Opposition Hold News Conferences

OW1803060794 Vladivostok Radio Vladivostok Network in Russian 0310 GMT 18 Mar 94

[From the "Lunch Hour Break" program]

[Text] Konstantin Borisovich Tolstoshein, acting head of Vladivostok administration, and Igor Petrovich Lebedintsev, acting head of the Kray administration, held a news conference for foreign and Russian journalists today at 1000 hours [0000 GMT] in the Vladivostok city administration building. Konstantin Borisovich Tolstoshein gave details of plans for administration of the city, specifically, on bringing order to Vladivostok in the ordinary city management sense of the word; and on care for veterans, invalids, and the poor. As stated at the news conference, additional stores will be opened to cater to them in the very near future. There was talk about preparing the city for next winter and, despite the warm March days, this work has already begun.

Today, at 1100 hours [0100 GMT], a news conference organized by the dismissed workers of the Gray House [Vladivostok administration building] was also held near the city administration building. According to our correspondent, some 40-50 people attended armed with placards and slogans, mostly from the Voters Association whom the city inhabitants saw yesterday. The latest news conference did not add any new information to shed light on what has happened.

Moscow Mayor Luzhkov on Current Issues

PM1703152594 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 4

[ITAR-TASS observer Tamara Zamyatina report specially for IZVESTIYA: "Moscow Mayor's Argument with Country's Government"]

[Text] "I am not planning to run for president, even if asked to," that was the position staked out by Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov of Moscow in our conversation. In his opinion, the published ratings of politicians in which Luzhkov ranks third as a possible contender for the post of head of state "get on my nerves. At the same time, after 50 years everyone knows their own worth, and so do I. My philosophy, my goal, and the meaning of my career is to do something useful for Moscow and win people's respect in my job," the mayor of the capital said.

Yu. Luzhkov makes no secret of his concern over the recent political amnesty, which, in his opinion, if it had to be carried out at all, should not have happened before 9 May, since the opposition's love of red-letter days is well-known.

And he is alarmed not so much by the release of the 10 main organizers of the October bloodshed in Moscow as by the amnesty for the "20,000 to 100,000 other criminals." Luzhkov believes that a considerable number of them will head for the capital. And he does not rule out the possibility that the former Lefortovo inmates and amnestied criminals "have common interests which money could help to bring closer together."

Luzhkov has no doubt that the opposition is well backed up by interested structures. "On 3-4 October the White House was being supported by gunmen and the members of fascist organizations. Big money was at work," he stated, referring to information from the special services. In order to ensure that the "victims" do not join forces to organize new unrest, the mayor intends to develop necessary measures at a session of the Moscow Anticrisis Committee.

Luzhkov is also disappointed about the fact that the political amnesty has sown dissension and confusion among law-enforcement workers. "MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] staffers' ability to counteract the opposition is even weaker today than it was 3-4 October," he believes. The fall in morale is explained, in his opinion, by the fact that a considerable number of militia workers now doubt whether it was right for them to side with the president and the government. "It is as if we are numbering law-enforcement staffers among the analytical public. Yet these are people of direct action. Now they are saying among themselves that there was no point in their swimming against the tide, since nothing came of it—either with the State Committee for the State of Emergency or with the organizers of the October coup." The fact that the militia is taking the same approach to the relationship between the presidential and opposition sides as it does to mafia investigations is even worse. The militia, the mayor said, sometimes deliberately delays such investigations by 15-20 minutes to allow criminal groupings the time to finish each other off, so that the militiamen can pick up the pieces on the battlefield later.

The political consequences of the amnesty have thereby, in the mayor's opinion, been directly counter to the deputies' good intentions of bringing harmony to society.

A destabilizing factor, Yuriy Luzhkov believes, is the smoldering polemic on the timing of the next presidential elections. He rebukes the press for, in his view, being excessively and prematurely interested in the subject: "Understand that it will not be any individual but the economic situation in the country that will predetermine the outcome of these elections," he exclaimed.

Like Viktor Chernomyrdin, who believes that it would be "unethical" under the current president to be talking about the next election, Yuriy Luzhkov considers such talk "unpresidential and undermining the head of state's authority." "Let's put this subject to one side until 1996," was his appeal to the press.

The mayor of Moscow refuted the numerous press claims that he had set up the Party of the Majority for his own future election campaign. "I have nothing to do with it, apart from the fact that, at the request of one of my friends, I signed a greetings message to the constituent congress of the Party of the Majority, since its aim of supporting the formation of a class of entrepreneurs does not run counter to my views," the mayor explained.

According to him, of all our parties he has most sympathy for the Russian Movement for Democratic Reforms, whose leaders—Gavriil Popov and Anatoliy Sobchak—have the "most sensible ideas." But when asked if he agreed with Gavriil Popov's claim that the political amnesty was thought up by Boris Yeltsin himself to rally the democrats around the president, Luzhkov laughed: "The press sometimes flatters politicians by ascribing a farsignted strategy to them. Sometimes after such articles you start to respect yourself. In actual fact decisions are most often made without any particular plan in mind." And that is a pity.

Incidentally, in Luzhkov's opinion the economic and social situation in Moscow at the moment is far more stable than in other parts of Russia. "For this reason not one of the 15 candidates from Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party who ran in Moscow made it to the State Duma," the mayor believes.

At the same time, he is by no means complacent about the state of affairs in the capital, where the implementation of social programs is being held up owing to a lack of funds. Nor can you envy Sergey Dubinin, Russian Federation acting finance minister, about whom Yuriy Luzhkov was justifiably angry:

"Last year alone Moscow paid 27 trillion rubles into the federal budget. Yet you can't get anything about of state coffers for the capital's needs. Dubinin states: 'Subsidies? You won't get any!' And I ask him: How are we supposed to solve urgent problems and, in addition, maintain this huge machinery of the state organs located in Moscow?

"Nobody is working on tax reform," Luzhkov continued. "Chaos reigns in the tax collection system. Yet the Russian Government has introduced a 3-percent tax to support high-tech enterprises. And this is a turnover tax, which in monetary terms is many times greater than any profits tax. And nobody explains how the state is spending value-added tax and other revenue—otherwise they would have to admit the irrational spending of budget funds."

This kind of tax policy, in Yuriy Luzhkov's opinion, "stifles enterprises and prevents them from expanding production."

One other "headache" for the mayor is the import duties that have been introduced by the Russian Government:

"I recently visited the food fair at the Izmaylovo complex. Trade was brisk and Moscow enterprises were actively concluding contracts with food suppliers from the provinces. The same day Central TV showed an interview with Vice Premier Aleksandr Zaveryukha, who stated: 'We in the government are examining the question of raising the duty on imported foodstuffs by 20-30 percent.' The next day agrarians at the fair stopped signing contracts, referring to the fact that they would need to revise their prices—in what direction is obvious. Nonetheless, the government carried out its intention. I am sure that import duties were raised to satisfy the agricultural lobby, and this decision will lead to a sharp increase in the prices not only of imported foodstuffs, but of Russian food too. First and foremost, it will have an impact on the cost of the basket of consumer goods for residents of large cities. And it is not clear why it is necessary to slow the influx of foreign food into the country. Have we really achieved surpluses? Disagreeing with this measure, the mayors of three major cities—Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Yekaterinburg—intend to send a protest to the government.

"I am convinced that the state should be concerned about the unity of its goals rather than about resolving local tasks. As regards the agrarian sector we need to improve production forces and production relations, as the classics of Marxism-Leninism taught us, rather than trying to ensure that Russian foodstuffs are competitive by cranking up the prices of imports. Otherwise the countryside's problems will again be resolved at the cities' expense."

Luzhkov has been arguing about tax policy not only with the acting finance minister but with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin too. According to the mayor, he tried to persuade the premier that there is no point in increasing duties on foreign cars imported into the country. As was the case with duty on food imports, this measure, he believes, will only serve to boost car prices, but without in any way improving Russian car manufacture. "Duty should be increased on right-hand drive cars and cars more than 10 years old to prevent pollution and to stop Russia's car scrap heaps filling up"—that was the argument he put to Chernomyrdin. When asked how the prime minister reacted, Yuriy Luzhkov countered with disarming frankness: "He adopted the previously planned decision of raising import duties."

As we can see, the mayor of Moscow is fully immersed in economic concerns. He made a point of stressing his reluctance to play politics. "We need to get creative processes going and start work. Then the opposition will retreat," Luzhkov said.

International Affairs

Military Cooperation Accord Signed With Romania

LD1803120194 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1708 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Nikolay Morozov]

[Text] Bucharest, 17 Mar—An agreement on cooperation between the defense ministries of Romania and Ukraine was signed today in Bucharest by Gheorghe Tinca and Vitaliy Radetskyy, the heads of the military departments of the two countries. [passage omitted]

During the talks, issues of regional safety were discussed in depth, Ukrainian Defense Minister Army General Vitaliy Radetskyy said in an interview to an ITAR-TASS correspondent. We believe that the proposal in the sphere of ensuring regional safety, which President Leonid Kravchuk made in Budapest last year, and the "Partnership for Peace" program are interconnected. The adoption of the Ukrainian proposal may become the first step in tackling the problems of the "Partnership for Peace".

We regard talk about isolating Russia from these processes as unrealistic, the head of the Ukrainian military department stressed. Russia is a great neighboring state, and a common historical past unites Ukraine and Russia. We treat Russia with great respect and are ready for bilateral cooperation with it.

As to the prospects of joining NATO, in accordance with the decision of the parliament, as is known, Ukraine is not a member of any bloc. Military-political and military-technical issues connected with it are being worked on at the moment, and the Defense Ministry proposals will be submitted to the new parliament that has the prerogative to make a corresponding decision.

The territorial issues of North Bukovina, the south of Bessarabia, and Zmeinyy Ostrov were not raised at the talks in Bucharest, V.Radetskiy noted. We recognize Romania's territorial integrity, and Romania fully recognizes the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Romanian side stressed that some would have liked to raise this issue for the purpose of causing the two neighboring countries to quarrel or of creating tension between them. However, we must proceed from the official stand of the heads of state. That is why Ukraine and Romania do not lay any claims on each other.

Shmarov, U.S. Envoy Discuss Upcoming Perry Visit

WS1703210294 Kiev Ukrayinske Radio First Program Network in Ukrainian 2000 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Today, Deputy Prime Minister Valeriy Shmarov held a meeting with William Miller, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the United States to Ukraine. During the meeting, which was held in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and good will, a range of pressing issues concerning the upcoming visit of U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry to Ukraine were discussed. The parties exchanged opinions on the results of the recent Ukrainian-U.S. talks at the highest level.

Envoy to UN: Security Council Should Be Expanded

WS1803111894 Kiev Ukrayinske Radio First Program Network in Ukrainian 0900 GMT 18 Mar 94

[Text] At a meeting of the UN General Assembly working group, Ukrainian Envoy to UN Oleksandr Mosych addressed the issue of just representation in the UN Security Council, and expanding its membership. He emphasized that the current composition of the UN Security Council, as well as its operation under the current multitude of work, requires that its number be increased, and that new regional circumstances and new participants in international relations be considered.

The implementation of this proposal would significantly improve the productivity level of the council that is a body acting in the name of all UN members, according to its statute responsibilities. At the same time, it is necessary to preserve all [words indistinct], to ensure that it immediately reacts to situations that require intervention, examining them, and adopting appropriate decisions. It is important to find compromises to resolve questions of membership in the Security Council, which would be acceptable to all countries, including the council's permanent members.

Envoy Concerned By 'Anti-Russian' Statements

LD1803032694 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2335 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Russian Ambassador to Ukraine Leonid Smolyakov has voiced Russia's deep concern over the public statements by some Ukrainian diplomats in third countries on Russia's foreign policy and Russo-Ukrainian relations.

A spokesman for the Russian Embassy in Kiev, Yevgeny Tyurin, told Interfax-Ukraine Thursday [17 March] that Smolyakov had drawn the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's attention to the "anti-Russian" lecture given by the Ukrainian ambassador to Canada, Viktor Batyuk, at the University of Ottawa. According to Russian sources, Batyuk described Russia's foreign policy as "undeclared cold war against Ukraine aimed at destabilizing its internal political situation" and that of Ukraine towards Russia as "anti-imperial."

The Russian diplomat said "such statements and other unfriendly actions" of this kind do not contribute to the development of Russo-Ukrainian relations in the context of agreements reached by the two countries' presidents and do not strengthen their good-neighborly relations in accordance with the foreign policy guidelines passed by the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet.

Kravchuk, Meri on Friendship, Russian Minority

WS1803121994 Kiev Ukrayinske Radio First Program Network in Ukrainian 0600 GMT 18 Mar 94

[Report by Yuriy Horban]

[Text] I will recall the words President Meri said immediately after arriving on Ukrainian land: Nobody has ever canceled the agreement on friendship and cooperation that was signed between Estonia and Ukraine as early as 1921. This visit, the Estonian president emphasized, is a continuation of our friendly contacts.

A similar agreement was signed in 1992, and the talks that have recently been held have resulted in another three documents, including two agreements on scientific-technical and cultural cooperation, an agreement on travel without visas for people who have diplomatic passports, and a protocol on mutual consultations between the Ukrainian and Estonian Foreign Ministries. The results of the visit were summarized at a joint news conference held by Lennart Meri and Leonid Kravchuk.

[Begin recording] [Meri, in Russian] We see that there are very favorable conditions for improving our partnership with Ukraine not only in issues of security and foreign policy, but also in economy, which is fundamental for any country. We have openly discussed this with the president [Kravchuk]. The same issue was addressed at a meeting with the Ukrainian parliament and during negotiations.

[Kravchuk, in Russian] Documents that have just been signed indicate that Estonia and Ukraine are willing to deepen their cooperation in the main spheres of life, primarily in the economy, and that we have common opinions on European and global problems, as well as that we have agreed on our positions regarding international relations and have defined ways for finding resolutions. The visit by the Estonian president to Ukraine is indeed important, and it is aimed—and I am convinced that this will happen—at improvement and expansion of our friendship and partnership. [end recording]

One of the journalists' questions concerned both presidents' opinions on the division of representative and executive authorities. The Estonian president replied that the new Constitution regulates this issue in his country. The responsibilities of both the government and the parliament are precisely defined. Leonid Kravchuk, in this regard, said as follows: I want to find a common language with the new parliament which is to be elected soon. This, however, depends not only on me. If the new Supreme Council, said Leonid Kravchuk, approves the orientation toward a market economy and building of a new democratic state, I will be supportive and constructively cooperative with it.

The so-called issue of the Russian-speaking population was also addressed by the journalists. In this regard, Lennart Meri said that certain Russian politicians use the issue of respecting human rights in former USSR republics cynically, and that it is often used as a political instrument to pressure them. It would be better, the Estonian president said, if those people found the time and straightened out the issue of human rights in Russia. In the opinion of the Ukrainian president, this problem can be solved, however, only in a democratic manner.

News Conference in Kiev Reported

LD1703174194

[Editorial Report] Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian at 1439 GMT on 17 March broadcasts a report by Kiev correspondent Vladimir Sokolov who reports on the official visit of Estonian President Lennart Meri to Ukraine.

Vladimir Sokolov begins his report by saying: "Concluding the visit, Presidents Lennart Meri and Leonid Kravchuk held a news conference for national and foreign journalists. They both pointed out that their talks were very friendly and that their was a coincidence of views on all issues. Lennart Meri stressed that Estonia and Ukraine had very similar problems of building statehood and of economic and social development following the acquisition of sovereignty and independence. However, Estonia has already overcome the most difficult period of the establishment of its economic and political independence, and has now entered a stage of all-round stabilization.

"Although the relevant agreements have been signed, economic ties with Ukraine are not yet sufficient. As for economic ties, Ukraine occupies only sixth or seventh place among Estonia's partner states which, of course, is far from meeting the potential for mutually beneficial exchange and new measures have been outlined for expanding and intensifying cooperation."

Sokolov continues: "Replying to a question from journalists, Leonid Kravchuk stressed that the talks touched on both the national security of the two countries and also their participation in strengthening international security. There was also a question about Leonid Kravchuk's attitude to the decree by Crimean President Yuriy Meshkov on holding a poll of the population on three issues. Leonid Kravchuk noted that he had suspended this decree only with regard to the holding of a referendum in the guise of a poll, and to the question on dual citizenship contained in it, since only the Supreme Council of Ukraine could decide such an issue. As for Meshkov's decree itself, he described it as a step toward unwanted confrontation and voiced the hope that common sense will prevail. Today, President Lennart Meri and officials accompanying him left Kiev for home."

National Affairs

Kravchuk Adviser Says Decree Will Stabilize Situation

WS1703124094 Kiev Ukrayinske Radio First Program Network in Ukrainian 1100 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] President Kravchuk is resorting to the powers granted to him by the Ukrainian Supreme Council in regard to the enforcement of Ukrainian laws in the Crimea, stated Mykola Mykhalchenko, chief of the Presidential Service for Issues of Domestic Policy, commenting on the president's decree concerning Yuriy Meshkov's decision on holding a poll among the Crimean people.

He emphasized that separatist circles in the Crimea will accuse President Kravchuk of not giving the Crimea the possibility to conduct reforms. Nevertheless, in the opinion of Mykola Mykhalchenko, in the long term, the Ukrainian president's decree will stabilize the political situation in both Crimea and Ukraine, and it serves as a serious argument in the battle with separatism, preventing the creation of a legal basis for Crimea's secession from Ukraine.

Aide Explains Decisions on Crimea

LD1703114194 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1103 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Report by ITAR-TASS correspondent Galina Nekrasova]

[Text] Lvov, 17 March TASS—According to the Constitution, "the Ukrainian president has the right to abrogate acts taken by executive bodies of the Crimean Republic (eds: the Crimea is a constituent part of Ukraine). The abrogation of Yuriy Meshkov's (eds: Meshkov is president of the Crimea) decree of 10 March is the first step in this direction," said Ivan Timchenko, head of the Ukrainian president's legal service, explaining Leonid Kravchuk's decisons over national television on Thursday.

He dwelt at length on the background of these events. The Crimean Republic adopted its Constitution on 6 May 1992 where Article 9 read: Relations between Ukraine and the Crimean Republic are based on treaties and agreements.

Article 17 granted Crimean citizens the right to have dual citizenship to be determined by treaties between the Crimea and other states. However, the above was in contradiction with the Ukrainian Constitution.

Therefore, the Ukrainian parliament proposed that the Crimea bring these and other articles in line with the Ukrainian Constitution. Such a decision was taken by the Crimean parliament on September 25, 1992.

Article 9 now reads that relations between Ukraine and its subjects are based on legislative acts and agreements. "The question of dual citizenship was the competence only of the Ukrainian parliament," Timchenko stressed.

The lawyer noted that the decree by the Crimean Republic president says about a public poll on whether there is any need for restoring these articles of the Constitution, although such questions are the competence of the Crimean parliament.

The preamble of Meshkov's decree runs that the poll will be held to study the will of Crimean citizens and to take decisions important for the Republic.

Timchenko claims that "in actual fact, a decision was taken to hold a consultative referendum" under the pretext of a public opinion poll. "This was the reason for Kravchuk to repeal items 1 and 2 of the above decree's Article 2," the lawyer stressed.

The Crimean central Electoral Commission held its meeting in Simferopol on Wednesday and discussed Meshkov's address. The Crimean president accused the commission of "unwillingness to organise this poll and of usurping the role of a constitutional court." The commission responded with a protest.

Crimean President Must Act Within Ukrainian Laws

LD1703155094 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1417 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Kiev has no intention of subjugating the Crimean president to the Ukrainian president, but the president of the Crimea will have to act in accordance with Ukrainian laws, Leonid Kravchuk told a news conference in Kiev on Thursday.

"If the Crimean president fails to understand this and begins to demonstrate his power or exceed Ukraine's laws and Constitution, this will pose the start of confrontation. The entire responsibility for it will lie on the person who starts it," Kravchuk declared.

Nevertheless, Kravchuk pointed out that "we shall not resort to the use of force toward the Crimea." He is "calling for common sense," the Ukrainian president said.

"The Crimea continues to receive subsidies from Ukraine," Kravchuk noted, and added that "there is no political independence without economic freedom."

According to him, the issue of dual citizenship, that was to be decided by referendum in the Crimea, "is within the competence of Ukraine and Russia, not that of the Crimea."

During his first meeting with Yuriy Meshkov, Kravchuk said, he reached agreement to come into contact when working out political decisions. "Evidently there are forces which directed the Crimean president to a different road," Kravchuk said.

"If some people think that they will become a state as soon as they proclaim it, they are deeply mistaken," he said. The Ukrainian president referred to the experience of Trans-Dniester, which, he said, "proclaimed itself a state, but failed to become one in practical terms."

President Issues Statement on 27 Mar Poll

LD1703182794 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1550 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] The press service of the president of Crimea issued a statement today in connection with the 12 March 1994 resolution by the Central Electoral Commission on the elections to the Supreme Council of the Crimea Republic. The statement indicates that in his decree "On Conducting a Poll Among the Citizens of the Crimea Republic on 27 March," President Yuriy Meshkov was guided by the electors' will and also took into account the refusal of the Supreme Council of Crimea to lift a moratorium on holding an all-Crimean referendum.

In setting the date of the poll, the president was guided by the fact that with the assistance of the Central Electoral Commission, significant organizational and material losses could be avoided in the course of conducting the poll and electing deputies to the Supreme Council of Crimea. The document underlines that the president will continue taking into account the Crimea citizens' will while solving the most important state issues.

Deputy Premier Announces Karbovanets To Be Devalued

LD1703152794 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1225 GMT 17 Mar 94

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] Ukraine has announced its intention of devaluing the karbovanets in the near future without introducing a floating exchange rate based on market dealings. Valentyn Landyk, the Republic's deputy prime minister told INTERFAX that the Cabinet of Ministers held a special conference devoted to the formation of a currency rate policy. The conference did not produce a final agreement on a mechanism for currency regulation. However, it is expected that a decision on this will be taken in the next few days.

The exchange rate for cash karbovantsy at exchange points at present is about 40,000 to the dollar. The official rate is used by the state to purchase half of the foreign currency incomes of exporters and other payments. At the end of 1993, inflation in Ukraine was over 60 percent per month but in January it fell below 20 percent.

Fire Reported at Khmelnytskyy Nuclear Power Plant

WS1703140394 Kiev Ukrayinske Radio First Program Network in Ukrainian 1100 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] As the Ukrainian Interior Ministry General Fire Department has reported, on 16 March at 2045 [local time], a fire erupted in the engine room at the first power unit of the Khmelnytskyy nuclear power plant in a cable box housing power and control cables.

The chiefs of the plant's fire department decided to deploy firefighters in the danger zone to extinguish the 6,000-volt cables. The firefighters wore special gear. In addition, to the firefighters' action, the plant personnel stopped the operation of the first power unit reactor. [passage indistinct]

The fire was extinguished at 2110. The damages are currently being assessed. According to preliminary assessments, the fire was caused by a short circuit in the main power cable. The radiation level remains normal.

Work Partially Restored...

WS1803122194 Kiev Ukrayinske Radio First Program Network in Ukrainian 1100 GMT 18 Mar 94

[Text] Today at 0250, the operation of the first power unit reactor of the Khmelnytskyy nuclear power plant was restored at 5 percent of its nominal power. The first power unit provides heating to the city of Neteshyn. The work on exchanging the damaged cables at the station's engine room is proceeding according to schedule.

Belarus

Parliament Opposition, Majority Differ on New Constitution

MK1703130094 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 3

[Report by Vitaliy Tsygankov: "First Constitution of Independent State Passed. Opposition and Majority Differ on Republic's Fundamental Law"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Zenon Poznyak, leader of the parliamentary opposition Belarus National Front, commenting in an exclusive interview to your NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA correspondent on the adoption of the Constitution, stated: "This Constitution has been passed only to introduce a presidential system designed for one specific person, Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich; and for one political action, presidential elections. Other than this, the Constitution is not going to work in a normal way; neither will the presidential system of government, because it does not provide for balanced relations between local authorities and the Supreme Soviet, between the president and the Supreme Soviet, between the executive and judicial powers. The Constitution has been designed to suit a totalitarian regime and the specific figure of Kebich, who actually has the Supreme Soviet in his hands now. It is designed to give Kebich absolute power in a legitimate way. Should another president come along, he would not be able to do anything in this unbalanced system, and would be drawn into conflict with the Supreme Soviet and local authorities.

Members of the parliamentary majority naturally see the adoption of the Constitution quite differently. Nikolay Skorigin, adviser to the prime minister and coordinator of the most influential "Belarus" parliamentary group, referred in an interview for your NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA correspondent to the above accusations: "This is simply ridiculous. How could the Constitution have been designed over two and a half years for one person? All the more so because no one can be dead sure of who is going to be elected first president of the Republic of Belarus."

"From the legal point of view, the passing of the Constitution is a foundation for the state's entire legal base, and from the political point of view, it is a legal guarantee of ensuring stability in the state. We have managed to cross the Rubicon from the old Constitution, which was a brake on creating a rule-of-law state, to the new Constitution without a single drop of blood having been shed. This is a great victory for what seems to be a virtually inefficient parliament." This is the opinion of Dmitriy Bulakhov, chairman of the parliamentary commission on legislation. [passage omitted]

Presidential Election Procedures Explained

LD1603183494 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 1300 GMT 16 Mar 94

[Excerpts] At the 13th session of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus—our special correspondent Mikhail Rutkowski reports:

[Rutkowski] At the beginning of the sitting, the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Myacheslaw Gryb, announced a sad event. Last night People's Deputy of the Republic of Belarus, Iosif Fyodaravich Vashkevich, died suddenly. He had been working as chief of management of the republic's Council of Ministers. [passage omitted]

The Chairman of the Supreme Soviet proposed considering the question of elections of the President of the Republic of Belarus. A report on this question was delivered by the chairman of the standing commission for state construction, Uladzimir Lewchyk. Here is an excerpt from his speech:

[Begin Lewchyk recording] As for the time limit for the collection of signatures, the commission within the framework of time for preparing the holding of elections of the president has tried to make these time limits as long as possible. They are 20 days, including time for forming the initiative group. The mechanism for collection of signatures (?in many ways) corresponds to the mechanism for collecting signatures for holding a referendum. In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic—which was passed—elections for the president are held using two rounds of voting. The candidate who receives more than half the votes of electors participating in the election is considered elected president. Elections are considered to have taken place if more than half of the registered voters participate. The second round of the elections is also conducted according to these rules, with the two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes in the first round. The draft law envisions the possibility of holding repeat elections for the president if none of the candidates is elected on the first or second round of voting, or in the event of the elections being recognized as not having taken place or invalid. According to preliminary estimates of the Central Electoral Commission, the presidential elections will cost us 116 billion rubles. [passage omitted]

Government's Debt Payment Measures Viewed

PM1703134394 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 16 Mar 94 p 2

[Report by Aleksandr Starikevich: "Belarus: Emergency Situation as Means of Managing Economy"]

[Text] "Daylight robbery" is how Belarusian businessmen assessed the actions of Kebich's cabinet, with regard to commercial structures. Finding itself in a grave situation, the government has found a way out in confiscating currency funds from economic players.

On 5 March, the Belarusian Council of Ministers issued a decree "on emergency measures for the Republic to reduce debts to the Russian Federation for gas and other energy carriers." In accordance with this document, 20 percent of funds in freely convertible currency and Russian rubles are being deducted from the accounts of all enterprises. It is characteristic that the accounts of Belarusian economic players in both republican and foreign banks are being cleaned out. This action is reticently referred to in the decree as "hiring for a period of three months under government guarantee."

But those were only the first flowers. On 11 March, the government published an addition to this decree. Now all enterprises, including joint ventures, must hand over their March profit in freely convertible currency and Russian rubles to state currency funds. The Council of Minister kindly promises to compensate for losses in Belarusian rubles at the Republic's national bank's exchange rate of 2 February 1944. The comrades from the government were obviously modest in selecting that date. Why not set 7 November 1917 as the starting point (or rather reckoning point)?

The arbitrary cessation of trading at the interbank currency exchange until 1 April was the logical continuation of the Council of Ministers' actions. Now, determining the exchange rate for foreign currencies against the Belarusian ruble is the exclusive prerogative of the Republic's national bank.

Although the government's actions are invested with outwardly legal forms, this alters nothing. Essentially, it is a case of the nationalization of a substantial proportion of the funds belonging to commercial structures. It is not difficult to predict where this will lead.

"We are almost guaranteed a couple of suicides," Mikhail Shevelzon, vice president of the Belarus union of entrepreneurs, believes. "People will simply be unable to settle their debts. If the state cannot pay its debts, a specific businessmen is obliged to be answerable in any situation. In addition, according to my calculations, about 70 percent of Belarusian enterprises' capital is already working outside the republic. As a result of the government's actions, this figure will obviously grow. The situation that has taken shape will also undoubtedly affect foreign investments."

Naturally, the Belarusian Government does not want to demonstrate so graphically to Russia, with whom it actually intends to unite, but the Minsk bureaucrats obviously do not understand that in our case the exchange is only a reflection of several other processes. In particular, according to the figures of the BELORUSSKAYA DELOVAYA GAZETA, 2.3 trillion rubles in unsupported credits were earmarked in January-February to subsidize agricultural enterprises, to cover the budget deficit, and for some other purposes, which is nearly twice last year's emission. Now, agrarian experts are demanding a further 6 trillion. But the government seems to believe that unification will write off everything and the Belarusian bureaucrats will yet again be able to enter paradise on the Russians' backs.

Over the weekend the cash dollar exchange rate rose from 8,500 to 11,000 Belarusian rubles. Comment is superfluous. Meanwhile, it emerged that the World Bank credit intended to support the Belarusian ruble exchange rate had been given out by the government to pay directly for energy carriers. This was announced by Stanislav Bogdankevich at a conference of the National Bank leadership and chairman of the boards of commercial banks. This fact will hardly give rise to a positive response among international financial circles.

The Belarusian Government is deceiving not only Western bankers, but also its own fellow citizens. In February, from the platform of the Supreme Soviet Vyacheslav Kebich swore that there would be no increase in prices for basic foodstuffs before the unification of the monetary systems. But on Saturday a loaf of bread was sold in stores for 300 rubles instead of Friday's price of 120 rubles.

To avoid undesirable consequences, the government announced in advance that as of 1 April (we will have a good laugh then) the minimum wage will be raised from 30,000 to 60,000 rubles. In this case, it is appropriate to ask: Where is the money coming from? Are we going on a spree at Russia's expense again?

What is happening today is only the start of the collapse. The Belarusian noose has been coiling long enough, but the finale has nonetheless arrived. A natural finale.

So far, it is unclear how exactly the union of entrepreneurs will react to the Council of Ministers' March decrees. Perhaps it will adopt a tough stance, but it will hardly be able to influence the government.

On the other hand, the businessmen themselves have already drawn the necessary conclusions. A leader of a large commercial structure who wishes to remain anonymous ("I may still have to work in this country") told an IZVESTIYA correspondent: "No one intends to feed this government. Any normal economic player will stop showing his currency profit. This is robbery. The nomenklatura undertook this step out of despair: The incompetents from the ranks of former party members are simply incapable of anything else. Now they have one commodity left that they can sell—sovereignty—and the status of a province in the Russian empire suits them very well."

The government has made its move, but what next? Let us allow that it succeeds at least partly in extinguishing the debt for energy carriers. But given the present state of the Belarusian economy, in a couple of months everything will be the way it was before, and then what? I very much doubt that entrepreneurs will give the Council of Ministers the opportunity to rob them again.

Alas, it looks as though the principle "if we can last the day we can hold out for the night" is prevailing in Kebich's cabinet. As before, the desired unification of monetary systems is looming. But even if this dubious measure does take place, will the prime minister's team survive until then?

It is no accident that the currency exchange auctions have been repealed. Their cessation was preceded by a scandal at the last auctions, which was held 10 March. Some 40 minutes before they started, representatives of the National Bank, citing a letter from the bank's chairman, Stnbislav Bogdankevich, demanded that currency purchasers supply copies of the contracts for purchasing goods abroad. No one had heard a word beforehand about the chief banker's message and so entirely naturally no one had the documents. After lengthy disputes, the auction began, but after the dollar exchange rate had risen from 9,120 to 12,200 Belarusian rubles the results of the auction were simply revoked. To avoid such undesirable figures in future, the auctions were simply canceled. For three weeks for the time being but it is by no means certain the exchange will resume work 1 April.

Republic Defense Ministry Sets Up TV, Radio Studio

PM1803092394 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 2

[Report by Valeriy Kovalev under "In Brief" rubric: "Belorusian 'Slavyanka' Goes on Air"]

[Text] Minsk—A television and radio broadcasting studio has been set up under the Ministry of Defense of Belorusia [Belarus]. It is staffed by 28 creative and technical workers who will prepare television and radio broadcasts on military subjects. The Defense Ministry hopes that the military television and radio studio will make it possible to provide more prompt and, most importantly, more objective coverage of the life, combat training, and service of servicemen and will help to enhance their authority in the eyes of their fellow citizens. Topics prepared by military television journalists are already used in national television news programs.

Moldova

Russian Envoy Arrives To Mediate in Dniester Conflict

AU1703150894 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1030 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Chisinau BASAPRESS, 17/3/1994—The special envoy of Russian President, Vladlen Vasev arrived last night in Chisinau to mediate the Dniester conflict. Tomorrow, 17 March, he will meet with President Snegur, who returns today from Brussels. A visit to Tiraspol is also scheduled for tomorrow, where Vasev will meet decision-makers of the self-proclaimed Dniester republic. Sources from the Russian Embassy told BASA that Vasev will stay in Moldova for about a week. During the summer of 1992 military conflict Vasev was in the group of Russian representatives as an observer in the four-party mechanism for solving the conflict. On 10 March, communicating about the meeting in Moscow of Dniester President Igor Smirnov with officials from the State Duma of Russia, Tiraspol radio asserted that Vasev was nominated as mediator at the insistence of the Dniester leader.

Puts Forward Settlement Plan

LD1703192194 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1714 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] President Yeltsin's representative at talks in Chisinau on the settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict Vladlen Vasev put forward a Russian plan for Transdniestria's possible legal status, he said in an exclusive interview with INTERFAX on Thursday.

Vasev will not comment on the plan until a meeting with Moldovan President Mircea Snegur and Transdniestrian leader Igor Smirnov scheduled for 17 March. He said that it gives Transdniestria greater autonomy.

"It is important for Moldova and the Transdniestrian region that this status should be within the framework of a single and integral Moldovan state," Vasev pointed out.

Snegur Praises Partnership for Peace Program

AU1703151294 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1030 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Chisinau BASAPRESS, 17/3/1994—President Mircea Snegur took the floor during the signing ceremony of the "Partnership For Peace" Document, in Brussels on 16 March. He noted that being in a very important geo-strategic zone at the intersection of numerous interests, by the help of the program the Republic of Moldova will strive for consolidation of peace and good will and for the solution of the various and complicated problems it presently faces, based on international principles and rights. "We are also ready to elaborate as soon as possible the document of attendance for the signing of the bilateral agreement of partnership that will define the character and degree of Moldova's cooperation with corresponding NATO structures," said Snegur. He declared that Moldova is interested in an effective participation in the program, "with the certainty that it will offer us favorable opportunities for the creation of a professional army, in accordance with requirements, democratic principles and international standards." Mircea Snegur stressed that the Republic of Moldova pays special attention to the consultations on security stipulated by the program, especially in the case when a member state deems its territorial integrity, political independence or national security threatened. According to President Snegur, "today these principles are violated by the presence of foreign troops on Moldovan territory. This fact is in our opinion the biggest obstacle for the final political solution of the conflict in Moldova's Eastern regions."

Snegur Invites WEU Military Observers to 'Eastern Regions'

AU1703152294 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1030 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Chisinau BASAPRESS, 17/3/1994—At the end of his visit to Belgium, President Mircea Snegur had yesterday a meeting with Van Eekelen, secretary general of the Union of Western Europe [WEU], the presidential spokesman said. Van Eekelen told Snegur about the structures of WEU and its purposes, the most important of which is to maintain peace and security in Europe. Discussing the relationship between WEU and Central and Eastern European states, the secretary general said that nine states have joined the WEU, but with remaining states bilateral relationship can be developed. President Snegur estimated, in his turn, that with the adherence to the "Partnership For Peace" program for insuring a total security the signing of a partnership agreement with WEU would be welcome. Snegur said that the 14th Army has to retreat unconditionally from Moldova's territory and that WEU military observers are welcome in Moldova's Eastern regions to eliminate suspicion and consolidate the confidence of Moldova's population in the constitutional organs' actions, the source notes.

Kazakhstan

Final Results of Parliamentary Elections Issued

LD1703115194 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1000 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Report by ITAR-TASS correspondent Vladimir Akimov]

[Text] Almaty, 17 March TASS—Kazakhstan has summed up final results of its parliamentary elections held on March [as received].

The central electoral commission has announced that 73.52 [as received] of all eligible voters took part in the polls, electing 176 people (154 men and 22 women) to sit in the parliament.

As concerns ethnic backgrounds, the new parliamentarians consist of 105 Kazakhs, 49 Russians, 10 Ukrainians, three Germans, three Jews, one Uzbek, one Tatar, one Korean, one Pole, and one Uigur.

Forty-two people were elected from the state list, 75 were nominated by public associations and 59 were self-nominated.

According to independent analysts, at least 60 per cent of the newly-elected parliamentarians are reliable supporters of Nursultan Nazarbayev, and they will therefore be able to control the majority in line with Nazarbyaev's wishes.

Full Details of New Parliament Given

LD1803115194 Almaty KAZTAG in Russian 1600 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] The Supreme Council comprises 176 deputies. Of them, 42 from the state list; 74 nominated by public associations; 59—self nominated. The oblasts are represented as follows: The city of Almaty, 15; Akmola Oblast, nine; Aktyubinsk Oblast, eight; Almaty Oblast, nine; Atyrau Oblast, six; East Kazakhstan, 10; Zhambyl, 10; Zhezkazgan, six; West Kazakhstan, seven; Karaganda, 13; Kzyl Orda, six; Kokshetau, seven; Kostanay, 11; Mangistau, four; Pavlodar, eight; North Kazakhstan, seven; Semipalatinsk, nine; Taldy Korga, eight; South Kazakhstan, 15, town of Leninsk, three. Among them, 154 men and 22 women.

As far as their education is concerned, 171 have higher education; two—incompleted higher education; two have secondary special education, and one person has a secondary education.

They are specialists in industry—40 people; in construction, 13; in transport, one; in agriculture, 21; economists, 20; pedagogues, 27; journalists, 13; lawyers, 16; medical doctors, 14; military servicemen, three; artistic figures, one; politologists, one; philosophers, one; other specialities, five.

In their designations they are: from state managerial organs—39; heads of enterprises, 19; directors of state farms, four; heads and employees of other organisations, 27; heads of enterprises in the nongovernmental sector, 23; academia, 12; heads of law-enforcement bodies, five; former Supreme Council deputies of the 12th convocation who worked as professionals, 18; people's writers, four; heads and representatives of public associations, 12; editors in chief, deputy editors in chief and journalists, eight; pensioners, two; temporarily unemployed, three.

Political parties and movements are represented as follows: SNEK (Union of the People's Unity of Kazakhstan), 30; Trade Union Federation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 11; NKK (People's Congress of Kazakhstan Party), nine; the Socialist party of Kazakhstan, eight; Peasant's Union of the Republic of Kazakhstan, four; Lad Republican public movement [Russian cultural center], four; the Organization of Veterans [pensioners] of the Republic of Kazakhstan, one; the Union of Kazakhstani Youth, one; the Human Rights Democratic Committee, one; the Association of Lawyers of Kazakhstan, one; the International public committee "Aral-Asia-Kazakhstan," one; the Congress of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan, one; deputies of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan of the 12th convocation [old parliament], 40 people. [passage omitted]

The result of the election at the Irtyshskiy constituency N101 of Pavlodar Oblast will be published later.

[Signed] The Central Election Commission

Chernomyrdin, Tereshchenko Discuss Ties, Baykonur

LD1703221494 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2020 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By O. Sayfulin; from the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] The prime ministers of Russia and Kazakhstan held a working meeting today. They discussed issues concerning bilateral economic cooperation, dual citizenship, and the use of the Baykonur cosmodrome.

It has become known that there will be no obstacles for the citizens of Kazakhstan to receive temporary citizenship in Russia and to change it when they return to Kazakhstan.

As for Baykonur, it can be handed over to Russia after signing a lease treaty. The price remains the only point issue. In addition, the prime minister of Kazakhstan said it that was also necessary to resolve ecological problems when using the cosmodrome. Ecological compensation should be defined. As of today, the financing of Baykonur remains the main issue. As for its technical safety, one should not worry about this. Accommodation for families of Russian officers and servicing personnel on Kazakhstan territory will also not pose a problem.

[Begin Tereshchenko recording] The programs that are to be implemented on Baykonur demand large investments. Presently, there are not enough of them either from Russia or Kazakhstan. [end recording]

Kyrgyzstan

Nation Unlikely To Join Partnership for Peace Program

LD1603194394 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1638 GMT 16 Mar 94

[Text] Kyrgyzstan will most likely not join NATO's Partnership for Peace program, said an aide to the Kyrgyz president.

Bakyt Abdrisayev told INTERFAX on Wednesday that Kyrgyzstan was giving the matter careful consideration, since the Central Asian republic had commitments under CIS collective security agreements.

Kyrgyz Defense Ministry spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Akzhal Isayev told Interfax the same day that the ministry was still unfamiliar with NATO's program and therefore had no position on it.

Entry 'Being Studied'

LD1703181794 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1652 GMT 17 Mar 94

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" Feature compiled by Nikolay Zherebtsov and Andrey Petrovskiy; edited by Vladimir Shishlin]

[Text] Kyrgyzstan will evidently refrain from joining NATO's Partnership for Peace program, said the chief of the international department of the president's office, Bakit Abdrisayev, in an interview with INTERFAX.

According to Askar Akayev's expert on world politics, the possibility of his country's joining the program is being studied, and "the approach to it is very cautious," since Bishkek is bound by its commitments in the framework of collective security treaties signed with CIS countries.

As INTERFAX learned from the chief of the Kyrgyz Defence Ministry's press center, Lt.-Colonel Akzhal Isayev, his ministry has not determined its attitude to the NATO program yet, since the military are not acquainted with it.

Tajikistan

Rakhmonov Addresses Union of Youths Congress

LD1703171594 Dushanbe Radio Tajikistan Network in Tajik 1200 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Excerpts] The first congress of the Union of Youths of Tajikistan commenced its work in the building of opera and ballet theater of the capital named after Sadriddin Ayni. Our correspondent reports from the congress.

[Correspondent] The representatives of the various youth organizations, in particular, the organizations of the higher schools, plants, enterprises, oblast youth amalgamations, and representatives of all the regions of the republic are taking part in the congress. [passage omitted] Emomali Rakhmonov, the head of state and chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Tajikistan spoke at the congress. In particular, he said the following:

[Begin Rakhmonov recording] Dear brothers and sisters, it is pleasant that this meeting and the youth congress are taking place on the eve of Navruz [Tajik New Year Day, 21 March]. I can see the representatives of the youth of all parts of our Republic in this hall and I am encouraged by the fact that the unity and integrity of the independent Republic of Tajikistan is being further strengthened. I am happy that the representatives of all nationalities living in our beloved country who are working for the prosperity and development of our country are sitting in this hall.

It is a pleasant thing that the youths have gathered here after the completion of the severe examinations of life with the hope of planning for a good future. Life itself is a real master [words indistinct] and opens the real image of the politicians and those people who are fighting for positions. Those people who argued about democracy until recently [words indistinct] and considered themselves as patriots and leaders of the nation have exerted pressure on the legitimate government and committed murder, robbery, and persecution of the representatives of certain rayons and regions of Tajikistan. Instead of honest labor during the sowing season they [politicians] involved the people in long-term rallies, they did not spare the lives of youths who were deluded, they began the distribution of positions and properties, and violated the law and political behavior. They insulted, murdered, and robbed representatives of other nationalities who had worked and lived with us Tajiks for a long time. Reminding you of this, I want to warn the youths. Youth has to learn from past mistakes.

They have to be united in the future and should follow the [way of] unity and solidarity because the youths are the future political figures, leaders of parties and movements, ministries and departments, and so on. Now that we are pursuing the road to a democratic society, we have to get used to tolerating multiparty and political pluralism and recognize it. [end recording]

[Correspondent] Following the afternoon break, the congress continued its work and its participants discussed a number of issues that are included on the congress agenda. The first congress of the Union of Youths of Tajikistan will continue its work tomorrow.

Turkmenistan

Niyazov To Replace Government Over Consumer Market

PM1703125994 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 16 Mar 94 p 2

[Report by Vladimir Kuleshov: "President S. Niyazov Ready To Replace His Government Unless the Consumer Market Is Put in Order"]

[Text] Ashkhabad [Ashgabat]—It is a long time since viewers tuning into the Turkmenistan news have seen the kind of dressing down given by President S. Niyazov to ministry and department leaders over the abominable state of the consumer market. Calling his adjutants [zampred] to attention, the Turkmenbashi told them: "All of our slogans and promises are worth nothing if store shelves remain empty. People are becoming exasperated—and rightly so. How much longer are you going to trade commodities from state resources at market prices?!"

Store shelves that have been stripped bare and on which you will not even find toothpaste, shoe polish, matches, or soap; soaring prices at state trade outlets—not to mention commercial kiosks and markets—even by comparison with those in Russia; the despondent faces of people gloomily wandering around the stores with the now-worthless manat—this, IZVESTIYA wrote 18 February—this is the situation in Turkmenistan's cities, even in the capital. Nor has it changed one iota today. The lack of the essential range of commodities conntinues, with the very same wildly inflated prices at state retail outlets.

How can you live if you earn 200-250 manats while a kg of meat at the market costs between 35 and 40 manats, a kg of potatoes is 10 manats, and a pack of cigarettes anything from 20 to 30 manats? Who controls all of this here in the Republic? Indeed, is it under control? In the final analysis, who regulates prices? These questions were quite rightly asked at the Cabinet of Ministers session.

Prices are one thing, but the absence of commodities in the stores, even those which are produced in Turkmenistan, is another problem dogging the consumer market. "Why is it that, despite the availability of raw materials and labor, production of these goods is not increasing?" S. Niyazov exclaimed indignantly, turning to his adjutants. "Who sanctions market prices for state resources?"

By the way, he put these questions to them some five months ago, when the manat was being introduced and when, taking advantage of the Turkmenbashi's absence from Turkmenistan, departments pushed up prices for goods and foodstuffs so that people ended up wandering around the stores as if they were in a museum. In those early October days a major dressing down was also delivered, but everything was quickly forgotten, and that is why today, when returning home from a trip to Moscow, people from Turkmenistan cram all their free luggage space with sausage, cheese, fresh eggs, jam, confectionery, and fruit in the Russian capital, because they will not find any such thing at state trade outlets in Turkmenistan. Those who cannot fly to Moscow do "the next best thing": On weekends, thousands of people from Krasnovodsk, Tashauz, and Mary come to Ashkhabad on the local trains and clear out the already impoverished stores, despite the exorbitant prices.

Giving his adjutants a 10-day breathing space before what is left of confidence in the government runs out, the Turkmenistan president demanded from it concrete, vigorous action to improve the consumer market situation and the supply to the population first and foremost of foodstuffs, medicines, and vital commodities.

Ukraine Vows To Pay Gas Debts; Russian Avtovazbank Ignored

MK1703131094 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 5

[Report by Mekhman Gafarly under the "Cooperation" rubric: "Ashgabat Refuses To Sell Ukraine's Debt to 'Avtovazbank.' Neither Does the Latter's Initiative Meet With Support in Kiev"]

[Text] The POSTFACTUM news agency has learned from sources close to the government of Turkmenistan that Republic Vice Prime Minister Valeriy Otchertsov, in charge of financial matters, has declined to meet with Avtovaz president Petr Nakhmanovich, who has arrived in Ashgabat. Other high Turkmen officials also ignored the invitation for a meeting. P. Nakhmanovich's trip is known to be connected with Avtovazbank's intention to buy Ukraine's debt to Turkmenistan for gas deliveries that stands today at $800 million.

Abad Kurbanmuradova, head of the trade department of Turkmenistan's cabinet, said in a POSTFACTUM interview regarding this that the question of Ukraine's settling its debt for Turkmen gas imports would be solved with the participation of the Ukrainian "Republic" corporation through which many Ukrainian enterprises effect economic relations with Turkmen enterprises. It is supposed that 30 percent of the debt will be paid to Turkmenistan in hard currency right away, while the balance will be paid in commodities in the course of 1994. Turkmen authorities have already agreed to carry out this project. Now it has been sent to the Ukrainian Government for approval. This information is also being confirmed in Kiev. The Ukrainian side declares that there have been no talks between Ukraine and Turkmenistan on reselling the debt.

Thus, Avtovazbank's initiative has won no backing and only caused bewilderment in the capitals of both states. POSTFACTUM reports that according to a confidential source, no Avtovazbank chiefs had consulted Ukrainian authorities on the matter, and the Republic would have hardly opted for such a step anyway.

Uzbekistan

President Issues Decree on Deregulation, Privatization

LD1603145894 Tashkent UZBEKISTAN APN in Russian 1111 GMT 16 Mar 94

[Text] The president of Uzbekistan has issued a decree on the priorities for deregulation and privatization. Among the priorities are broad involvement of the population in the process of reforms by means of developing the securities market, creating public joint-stock companies with a reduction in the proportion of shares belonging to the state, and forming markets for real estate and means of production.

Another priority is the demonopolization of production and control structures and the attraction of foreign investments by holding tenders, auctions, investment auctions, and direct sale of property. The decree stresses the need for state support for privatized enterprises.

For public joint-stock companies in which the state retains its share, it is envisioned to have blocs of shares belonging to the state, to the work force, to foreign partners, and free selling on stock exchanges and securities markets, including those abroad.

Bank Refutes Early Introduction of National Currency

LD1703114694 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 0900 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] The Central Bank of Uzbekistan has refuted reports that the Republic was going to introduce a permanent national currency in April to replace the temporary sum coupon. The bank said that this would happen in the second half of the year. Meanwhile, the fall of the sum coupon is continuing. Its market exchange rate against the ruble is nine to one.

Armenia

Government Not To Use Nuclear Power for Military Aims

NC1703211494 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1800 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] The Russian and Armenian Governments signed an agreement in Moscow today on the demothballing and industrial repair of the Armenian nuclear power plant [ANPP].

According to the signed agreement, the sides will jointly inspect the basic equipment of ANPP, [words indistinct], restore its operations up to the trial stage, and implement additional safety measures. Joint work will also be carried out to bring the plant to the start-up level, and to train the technical staff.

The Russian side is carrying out the engineering-technical work to prepare the ANPP for renewed operation and industrial use, and is supplying the nuclear fuel. It is also helping set up organs that will supervise the operation, organization, and nuclear radiation safety at the ANPP; structures that would supervise the organization of nuclear power production in Armenia; and an appropriate system to control and account for the nuclear material. It is also drafting formal and technical documents.

The Armenian side will adopt the Russian Federation's regulations and laws on nuclear plant safety. It will assume responsibility for the physical protection of the Armenian nuclear plant.

The agreement also envisages a number other points: Specifically, the sides will not impose custom duties on (?equipment) and goods needed for the demothballing and the industrial restoral of the ANPP, and will ensure unimpeded travel for the specialists working in the plant and for their families.

The Armenian side guaranteed that the nuclear material it receives, the nuclear and non-nuclear materials derived from it or produced from its use, and the apparatus and equipment it obtains will not be used for the production of the nuclear arms or other nuclear explosive devises, or for any other military purposes.

The Russian Federation's Atomic Energy Ministry, and Russian Supervisory Board for Nuclear Radiation Safety, the Armenian Fuel and Energy Ministry, and the Armenian Council of Minister's State Directorate for the Supervision of Nuclear Energy will be responsible for the implementation of the agreement.

The Agreement was signed by Armenian Prime Minister Grant Bagratyan and the Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets.

Armenian Deputy Prime Minister Vigen Chitechyan; Eduard Yegoryan, a member of the Armenian Supreme Council Presidium; the Armenian permanent representative in Russia Feliks Mamikonyan, and other officials were present at the signing ceremony.

In reply to reporters' questions after the signing ceremony, Grant Bagraytan and Oleg Soskovets assessed the significance of the agreement in strengthening and broadening the economic ties between the CIS countries, particularly between Armenia and Russia.

The Armenian prime minister described the agreement as a major step toward solving Armenia's energy problems.

Azerbaijan

Armenians Fire on Positions in Agdam Region

NC1703192994 Baku TURAN in English 1656 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Baku, March 17 (TURAN)— This morning the positions of the armed forces of Azerbaijan were fired upon by Armenian infantry in the Agdam region. TURAN was informed by the press-service of the Defence Ministry of Azerbaijan that the Azeris did not retaliate. According to the same source, relative calm has been maintained in other sections on the front.

Talks With Armenian Parliament Chairman Assessed

NC1703183894 Baku Az[illegible]aycan Radio Televiziyasi Television Network in Azeri 1600 GMT 16 Mar 94

[Commentary by Qulu Meherremov]

[Text] The mass media have described the meeting between the chairmen of the parliaments of Azerbaijan and Armenia as an important development in the effort to establish peace between the two republics. First, I wish to comment on the military and political factors that have created that viewpoint and paved the way for a better atmosphere in the region. It seems that Armenia's effort to deploy reinforcements at the front lines after losing many men in Azerbaijan's counterattacks during the past two months, the strengthening opposition in that republic against the war, and the decrease in the foreign aid Yerevan has received have undermined Armenia's plans to find a military solution to the dispute. Meanwhile, the intensified activity in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, the relations established between Azerbaijan and several countries that have supported Armenia, and the strengthening possibility that the recent political initiatives in the world on Abkhaziya and Bosnia may be broadened to cover the dispute in the Caucasus can be regarded as one of the reasons that has prompted the chairman of Armenia's parliament to urge his counterpart in Azerbaijan to agree to hold talks.

Of course, Russia's anxiety in its foreign policy on what Armenia's situation will be in the battlefields and the Transcaucasus in general if the inclination in the world for an agreement strengthens has had a significant bearing on the meeting of the two officials.

What is the difference between the talks held by the chairmen of the two parliaments and the meeting the deputy chairmen of the parliaments of Azerbaijan and Armenia held through Russia's mediation in 1993? The political nature of the talks clarifies that matter. It is true that Azerbaijan's anxiety and conviction that Armenia may resort to deceitful activities is justified. However, the fact that the meeting between the two chairmen has been realized as a result of that republic's initiative has, in one way or another, clarified the question as to which country has lost its potential in maintaining the war.

Meanwhile, the talks and the principles and conditions that were agreed on, and which were also discussed during the meeting, have indicated Armenia's new political inclinations in its approach on the war in Karabakh, which was kindled by that republic. If that meeting has been the outcome of a sincere approach in Armenia's diplomacy, an approach that can hardly be expected from that republic, then it can be regarded as an indication that Yerevan may make an effort to contribute toward the solution of the problem. Obviously, holding high-level talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia will be possible if, as the chairmen of the two parliaments have agreed, a strong guarantee is given for the withdrawal of the Armenian Armed Forces from the occupied territories in Azerbaijan. The high-level talks will also facilitate the realization of the other measures that the two chairmen have agreed on.

Naturally, the intensive talks with Armenia will expose the claims made by the Armenians in Karabakh, regardless of the effort that has been made to present them as a side to the problem. They will also facilitate the realization of the conditions the chairmen of the two parliaments have agreed on, reactivate the UN resolutions on the dispute, and pave the way for the return of hundreds of thousands of people to their homes.

Undoubtedly, one of the important tasks of Azerbaijan's diplomats is to take political and legal measures on the hope-inspiring provisions of the agreement between the two sides, which are still on paper.

Ministers Return From CIS Moscow Meeting

NC1703220194 Baku Azerbaycan Radio Televiziyasi Television Network in Azeri 1600 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] A joint session of the foreign and defense ministers of the CIS countries was held in Moscow on 16 March. Our republic was represented at this meeting by our Foreign Minister Gasan Gasanov and Defense Minister Mamedrafi Mamedov.

The meeting discussed a number of problems in connection with the implementation of the convention on the rights of national minorities, agreement on collective security, ties between the CIS and the CSCE, and Cooperation for Peace.

The Azerbaijani delegation returned home today.

Foreign Minister Gasan Gasanov will hold a news conference tomorrow morning.

Delegation To Attend CIS Interparliamentary Council

NC1703221494 Baku Radio Baku Network in Azeri 1700 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Afiyeddin Dzhelilov, deputy chairman of the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet, has said that the CIS Interparliamentary Council meeting in Saint Petersburg will discuss the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in addition to other issues. Afiyeddin Dzhelilov is heading a delegation to Saint Petersburg. He disclosed at a briefing he held before he left Baku that the Interparliamentary Council will discuss the dispute between the two republics.

Dzhelilov recalled that the Interparliamentary Council's previous session was briefed by the republic's delegation on the dispute and Azerbaijan's approach; and he stressed that the republic's representatives will reiterate Azerbaijan's position on the peaceful settlement of the dispute when the Council meets on 18 March. Azerbaijan's position has already been explained by the republic's leaders several times.

The journalists were informed that the Interparliamentary Council's permanent committees deliberated on economic and financial issues, protection of the environment, social policies, and other matters a few days ago. They also set the agenda of the Council. Dzhelilov said that several representatives from the Azerbaijan National Assembly attended the permanent committee meetings. He also said that the republic's delegation has made plans to hold talks with the parliamentary representatives of the Russian Federation, Belarus, and Georgia.

TV Broadcast Hours Cut By Electricity Shortage

LD1703161494 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1400 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] According to RIA, broadcasting of daytime television programs in Azerbaijan has been cut by two hours because of a shortage of electricity. The management of the republic's state television and radio company is not ruling out the possibility of further cuts or even a complete halt to television broadcasts during the day on all television channels, including commercial

Parliament Session Postponed; PFA Complains

NC1703193494 Baku TURAN in English 1656 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Baku, March 17 (TURAN)—The session of Milli Majlis which [was] scheduled for March 17, at 12.00 a.m. has been postponed, reports national TV.

The agenda included discussion of the results of the Armenian-Azerbaijani talks on March 12, and the intent by the Popular Front to carry out a coup d'etat on March 5.

Yesterday, the deputies of the PFA [People's Front of Azerbaijan] and the leader of the National Independence Party, Etibar Mamedov, said that they will raise the issue of the harassment and persecution of the independent press and the concluding truce with Armenia which is disadvantageous for Azerbaijan.

Amnesty for Political Crimes Restricted

NC1703215894 Baku Azerbaycan Radio Televiziyasi Television Network in Azeri 1600 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Law on restrictions on the implementation of amnesty acts; date of issue not given—read by announcer]

[Text] With the aim of strengthening the struggle against the criminal acts committed against the Azerbaijani Republic's sovereignty and territorial integrity, to ensure real accountability of people involved in such crimes, and to improve the country's defensive capability, the Azerbaijani National Assembly decides that:

The application of the amnesty acts is hereby banned in the case of people involved in crimes connected with the illegal introduction of the Soviet troops into Baku on 19-20 January 1990, the massacre in Khodzhaly, and the occupation of the Azerbaijani Republic's territory by the Armenian Armed Forces.

[signed] Geydar Aliyev, president of Azerbaijan.

Mutalibov Forms Exile Front; Aliyev at Risk

MK1703114094 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 4

[Report by Georgiy Bovt, Stanislav Tarasov under the "Russia in Conflict Settlement" rubric: "Azerbaijan May Be in for a Change of Power"]

[Excerpts] The latest events concerning the Karabakh conflict give grounds for drawing two mutually exclusive conclusions at one time: either the situation has finally spun out of the control of any of the conflicting parties, or it has been skillfully orchestrated by someone. One thing is clear: If the second theory is true, the movement is toward the ousting of the Aliyev regime in Baku. [passage omitted]

While hostilities were under way in Karabakh, equally curious events occurred in Moscow yesterday. KOMMERSANT-DAILY has learned that a delegation of representatives of the Azerbaijani opposition secretly came here to announce the creation of a Democratic Front and, subsequently, a coalition government or an emergency committee under former president Ayaz Mutalibov (who has been hiding from Aliyev in Moscow). Opposition members think that Azerbaijan is on the verge of collapse. According to their reports, 60 percent of the republic's territory is currently not controlled by the Baku regime, while Aliyev's main opponent, Prime Minister Suret Guseynov, has decided to wash his hands of it and has resigned. The opposition, however, plans to put forward their own proposals for overcoming the crisis—by way of rapprochement with Russia—and their options for the Karabakh crisis settlement within the framework of a general peace settlement in the Caucasus.

According to reports from Azerbaijani sources, Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Gasanov and Defense Minister Mamedov also stayed in Moscow yesterday on a secret mission. Presumably they were busy bargaining about their own political future in the event Aliyev is removed from office. Gyandzha's fall may well become a signal for the coup. So, Aliyev's fate is in the hands of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Or of Moscow.

Georgia

Shevardnadze on Cabinet Confirmation Procedure

LD1703121494 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0920 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] The parliament of the Republic of Georgia reconvened today [17 March] and was chaired by the Deputy Speaker Vakhtang Rcheulishvili. [name as heard]

Eduard Shevardnadze, the chairman of the Georgian State Council and head of state addressed parliament on the procedure of confirming the Cabinet of Ministers to be discussed by parliament on Tuesday 22 March.

The agenda was confirmed. The first issue on the agenda was a resolution on high schools addressed by the Chairman of the Education Commission Raul Kuprava. The issue caused heated debates.

At the moment parliament is having a break.

Shevardnadze Appoints New Vice Premier

LD1703182394 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian 1700 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Tbilisi, 17 Mar—Iberia news agency has learned that, by order of the Georgian head of state's, Temur Basilia, a member of the Georgian parliament, has been appointed a Georgian vice premier.

Shevardnadze To Clear 'Drug Addicts' From His Staff

LD1703180994 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1652 GMT 17 Mar 94

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature: compiled by Nikolay Zherebtsov, Andrey Petrovskiy, edited by Vladimir Shishlin]

[Text] Twenty eight members of Eduard Shevardnadze's office were subjected to an unusual procedure on Wednesday. They began to undergo medical tests designed to reveal drug abusers.

As Interfax learned from the Georgian leader's aides, state counsellors, chiefs of departments and ordinary members of the office had their urine tested, showed doctors their blood vessels and answered questions. All this aims to rid government institutions of drug addicts. According to an official, such examinations will be regular.

On February 5th Eduard Shevardnadze signed a decree which said that "the growing trend toward drug addiction jeopardizes people's health, poses a threat to national security, and discredits government institutions." In this connection a governmental commission was formed. It is led by Deputy Premier Irakly Menagarishvili.

The check-up will spread to other government institutions, above all to the Defence and Interior Ministries, some of whose members have been caught abusing or trafficking narcotics.

'No Drug Addicts' Found

PM1703151794 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 18 Mar 94 p 1

[Report by Besik Urigashvili: "Checks Confirmed: Shevardnadze Did Not Do Drugs"]

[Text] Tbilisi—The Georgian Health Ministry's drug service has carried out medical checks on members of the Georgian head of state's apparatus in order to flush out drug addicts there. Shevardnadze himself underwent a medical too. As might have been expected, no drug addicts were found in Shevardnadze's apparatus.

Ramaz Sakvarelidze, head of the Georgian leader's press service, made the following comment on this unusual event: Drug addiction has penetrated the state's structures of authority. This is one means of combating it. All officials in ministries and departments along with the personnel of the parliament and cabinet of ministers apparatuses will undergo similar checks.

The reason for the checks was the countless statements by Georgian parliamentarians to the effect that some members of the cabinet of ministers do drugs and are helping to form a drugs mafia in Georgia. At the same time the power ministries—the Defense Ministry and the Ministry of Internal Affairs—were the primary targets along with staffers in the apparatus of certain vice premiers.

We will leave aside the effectiveness of these actions, since any sensible person is aware that these checks will have zero results in practice. The moral aspect is far more important. And it is hard to disagree with the opinion voiced by parliament Deputy Ivlian Khaindrav, who says that the enforced nature of these checks is offensive. As for the propaganda nature of the action, in the current situation it can only impress Joe Public.

However, the problem of drug addiction in Georgia has indeed become menacing. Figures provided by the Georgian Internal Affairs Ministry Narcotics Administration demonstrate that the republic is one of the main staging posts for the international drug business. In the last few years there has been a considerable increase in drug use in Georgia itself. The country is now one of the world leaders in the field.

Abkhaz Separatists Cut Off Gali Rayon

LD1703125494 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0920 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] The Abkhaz separatists have staged another adventure. Under the pretext of avoiding the spread of an infectious disease, they declared a quarantine on the whole of the territory of Gali rayon, thus making it impossible for relatives on either side of the Enguri river to visit each other.

Patsatsia Receives Russian Border Guards Chiefs

LD1703124494 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0920 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] The Cabinet's press service told the CONTACT INFORMATIONA AGENCY that Georgian Prime Minister Otar Patsatsia met with a delegation of commanders of the Transcaucasian border troops today.

Viktor Zemtsov, commander in chief of the border troops, said that both he and his headquarters will be based in Stavropol and that Vyacheslav Chistousov has been appointed head of the Russian border troops in Georgia.

On behalf of the Georgian Government, Otar Patsatsia handed Zemtsov a letter of thanks. Zemtsov expressed hope that the friendly relations between the Georgian and Russian border guards will continue.

Border Guard Headquarters Moves to Stavropol

MK1803101094 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 18 Mar 94 p 3

[Report by Tengiz Pachkoriya: "Caucasus Border District Department Redeploys From Tbilisi to Stavropol but Russian Border Guards Will Continue To Man the Turkish Border"]

[Text] A press conference for Georgian and foreign journalists on 17 March in the headquarters of the special Caucasian Border District in Tbilisi was devoted to the completion of this directorate's redeployment from Tbilisi to Stavropol. Lieutenant General Viktor Zemtsov, commander of the district, told the journalists that the redeployment was of a planned nature. Being moved together with the directorate are some of the district's subunits. Zemtsov underscored at the same time that all the groups of forces necessary for guarding the state border with Turkey will stay on the territory of Georgia. "We are not leaving Georgia and Armenia, our directorate is simply moving over to Stavropol," said Zemtsov, adding that the district is in charge, first, of the former USSR borders guarded by Russian Federation border guards; second, of the Russian Federation state border in the Northern Caucasus. Along this border, the guards will keep tabs on the movement of weapons, contraband, and drugs from Russia to other countries and vice versa.

The district was created in line with the Russian Federation president's edict of 1 March 1994. Before that there existed, for one year, a Northern Caucasus border district, which was known as the Transcaucasus border district until 1 March 1993.

On the morning of 17 March the commander met with Georgian leaders, in particular with Prime Minister Otari Patsatsiya, and expressed thanks to the Government of

Georgia for understanding and support, for kind relationships. "We don't say 'goodbye,' we say 'see you again,' and we will continue guarding the state border."

Talking to journalists, Viktor Zemtsov remarked that residents of the Republic of Georgia will also serve in the Russian Federation border troops beginning this year. As early as this April or May, they will be first drafted for service in the Russian Federation border troops to guard the state border with Turkey. The number of draftees will be between 500 and 600 men. In the future, he said, nearly 30 percent of the entire personnel of the Russian Federation border troops stationed in Georgia will be the republic's residents. Among them, there will be enlisted men, warrant officers, and officers. Drafting will be effected irrespective of the men's nationality: Georgians, Russians, Abkhaz, and others will be eligible.

Responding to questions relating to border control between Russia and Georgia, Zemtsov said that subunits and units of Russian Federation border troops are being deployed along the Psou River. Their missions in guarding the state border, in preventing the crossing from the Russian Federation into Georgia and vice versa of any groups of people and arms, have already been defined for them. He said he has some experience in checking up on and detaining groups that carried weapons from Russia to Abkhazia and back.

Thus, the district continues to perform its duties, and one should not create a stir about the district directorate's redeployment from Tbilisi to Stavropol.

Cabinet Adopts Program To Counter Energy Crisis

AU1703125094 Tbilisi SAKARTVELOS RESPUBLIKA in Georgian 11 Mar 94 p 2

[Report by Eduard Ediberidze: "In the Cabinet of Ministers. With the Aim of Stabilizing the Republic's Energy Supply"]

[Excerpt] It seems that the serious situation that took shape in the republic in winter due to the acute shortage of electric power is gradually returning to normal. Elimination of the consequences of the recent accident at the Tbilisi State Regional Power Station, the supply of natural gas and fuel oil from Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, in spite of the large debts that Georgia owes to these countries, and the spring high-water in the rivers, which has increased the seasonal output of hydro-electric stations, have enabled us to improve to some degree the supply of electric power to vitally important installations such as bakeries and hospitals and also to the population. During the last few days, the Tbilisi subway, though operating according to a strict schedule, has been functioning almost normally; it carries more than 90 percent of all passengers travelling in the Georgian capital. Trolleybuses have again started to operate along certain city lines. Telephone communications have been restored in most areas. However, there is still very much that needs to be done in order to achieve complete stability in the republic's electric power complex. As before, the new residential areas in Tbilisi and individual cities and rayons in the republic are permanently without electricity. Industrial enterprises remain idle, while expecting a change in the electric power situation....

This was a topic of discussion at the regular session of the Georgian Cabinet of Ministers Presidium under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Otar Patsatsia that was held on 9 March. The main point on the agenda was the question of urgent measures aimed at stabilizing the situation that has taken shape in the republic's electric power complex. A thorough analysis of both the objective and subjective reasons that have given rise to the crisis in this most important branch has enabled us to elaborate a concrete program aimed at bringing it out of this serious situation and creating real preconditions for a radical improvement in energy supplies to the economic complex and the population during the autumn and winter of 1994-95. It is planned to increase the production of electric power this year to 11-12 billion kilowatt hours; at the same time, compared with last year, the rate of increase amounts to 112.2 percent. In order to implement this program, it has been decided to allocate 3.5 billion rubles to this branch from the credits received by Georgia; this money will go, first and foremost, on repairing the equipment at the Tbilisi State Regional Hydro-Power Station and the Inguri Hydro-Power Station and on increasing the level of production. In accordance with the adopted decree, the appropriate instructions have been given to the "Sakenergo" [Georgian electric power production and consumption] department and other departments and ministries, the heads of enterprises and organizations, and the republic's town and rayon local administrative bodies in order to bring the branch out of the crisis. [passage omitted]

Power Supply to Poti Restored

LD1703160194 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0300 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] The power supply has been restored to Poti, and the main enterprises—the port of Poti and the mill—have started to function at full force. According to our correspondent, everything is being done for the resumption of production in every enterprise.

Poll Shows 36.7 Percent Believe Leaders Misusing Positions

AU1703115394 Tbilisi REZONANSI in Georgian 10-11 Mar 94 p 2

[Unattributed report: "One-Quarter of Tbilisians Believe That the Republic's Authorities Are Consciously Harming the Republic"]

[Text] The current authorities of the Republic of Georgia...

are concerned with their own well-being—36.7 percent;
are concerned with the well-being of the republic—28.1 percent;
are consciously harming the republic—24.5 percent;
difficult to say—10.7 percent.

The above poll was conducted by the REZONANSI Sociological Service in Tbilisi on 20-21 February. There were 500 respondents.

It is the view of 36.7 percent of Tbilisians that the republic's leaders are using their positions to organize their own personal lives.

It has to be said that the view expressed by this 61 percent of the capital's residents cannot be far from the truth as, otherwise, it turns out that Georgia is being led by people who are mentally retarded. If we take into account the superfluous number of leaders, it is impossible for so many people to have ended up in one place by chance, unless, of course, they were specially gathered. One can undoubtedly point out the criminal action or lack of action of the leader and the heads of Parliament and government as a result of which they are condemning a large part of the population to starvation. In a country where almost all products are sold at world prices, the minimum wage amounts to 17 American cents.

It also has to be said that, given the excessive size of the apparatus of state officials and their visibly small salaries, the republic's leaders are intentionally pushing them toward corruption. Corruption instituted from the top—in the police, the Procurator's Office and judicial bodies, and also in structures of local administration—is having and will have particularly serious consequences.

It is suspected that the damage being done to the republic was premeditated, as was the fact that, following ratification of Georgia's membership of the CIS, there was an amazing change overnight in the provision of electric power, water, and transport to the population. Regarding the supply of electric power, prior to ratification of the CIS statutes, the situation prevailing in Georgia was more catastrophic than that in Armenia in the winter of 1992-93, which, for Armenia, had been the worst winter since the outbreak of the war in Nagorno-Karabakh. At that time, Georgia was the only source of electric power for Armenia and, in spite of this, the population was being supplied with electric power regularly and according to schedule and the subway was functioning normally.

Moreover, prior to ratification of the CIS statutes, the following situation prevailed in Rustavi [important industrial city south-east of Tbilisi]: A large part of the town had been completely without any electricity and water for three weeks. The population (as in Varketili) [suburb of Tbilisi] had closed the road that needed to be cleaned by the authorities (if we are to believe the rumors being circulated, the city's mayor Areshidze was telling them that they had wanted democracy and this was it).

Following ratification of the CIS statutes, the supply of both electric power and water was restored.

Estonia

Zhirinovskiy 'Representative' Faces Charges

WS1703160194 Tallinn BNS in English 1057 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Tallinn, Mar 17, BNS—Estonian Defense Police on Wednesday [16 March] formally brought charges against Pyotr Rozhok, the representative of Russian radical nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's misleadingly-named Liberal Democratic Party in Estonia.

Rozhok told BNS the charges brought against him were about fanning inter-ethnic hostility. Rozhok in his speech in Narva on Jan. 25 and in an interview with the Russian-language SILLAMAESKI VESTNIK local newspaper of the northeast Estonian town of Sillamae "fanned inter-ethnic and political hostility," the indictment says.

The representative of Zhirinovskiy's party at a meeting of the Narva Union of Russian citizens had said President Lennart Meri was a "president of the Estonians in the best case, not of Russians," because the country's Russian-speaking population had not participated in his election. He said the same of the Estonian parliament.

In an interview with the SILLAMAESKI VESTNIK Rozhok said Estonia is a traditional Russian domain. He said the retired Russian military living in Estonia should set up paramilitary units "for defending their honor and dignity" in the case if Estonian authorities decided to send them out from the country.

The indictment was read to Rozhok in the presence of a deputy consul of the Russian Embassy in Tallinn, Valeriy Chalovsky.

Rozhok said he has to sign a document on not leaving his permanent place of residence. He said he hasn't signed the paper yet.

Rozhok had told the police he was no more going to appear before police for interrogation. Security police officials had then said he would be brought before police under compulsion if necessary.

The Zhirinovskiy party representative last appeared before Estonian police for interrogation on March 10. Deputy Consul Chalovsky was also present then.

Rozhok on March 10 said he was not going to use the services of Estonian lawyers and added he had no intention to pay to any lawyer at all. "You yourselves have made up this soup, now you also eat it," he said in explanation.

Holger Siigart, deputy head of the Estonian Defense Police, said investigation into Rozhok's case was going to continue and that Rozhok will in any case have to appear before investigators to give his statements. Siigart also said the issue of the defense lawyer was going to be resolved, but he didn't elaborate.

Meri Comments on State Visits to Israel, Ukraine

WS1703210994 Tallinn ETA in English 1753 GMT 17 Mar 94

["News Release"]

[Text] Tallinn, March 17—President Lennart Meri arrived from a visit to Ukraine on Thursday [17 March] and gave a news conference at the Tallinn airport.

On commenting his earlier visit to Israel, Meri recalled as most remarkable language-teaching to immigrants. It was interesting to see how in only six months a person virtually melts into the society, Meri said. Meri also said that after meetings with the president, prime minister, foreign minister and representatives of the Israeli parliament, he knows that Israel understands the tasks that lie ahead of Estonia.

On commenting on Ukraine, Meri said he thought the west often made a mistake in talking of the Baltic countries and former regions of the defunct Soviet Union. Ukraine is one of the biggest European countries, Meri said. We could see ourselves that gigantic economic reforms lie ahead of Ukraine and that the country intends to build a strong independent state which would be open to all countries of the world, he added.

Chief Negotiator Begins Consultations With EU

WS1703181494 Tallinn BNS in English 1619 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Tallinn, Mar 17, BNS—Estonia is going to turn to the European Union [EU] for mediation in its talks with Moscow ou the Russian troop withdrawal.

Estonia's chief negotiator for the talks with Russia, Vaino Reinart, began consultations on the issue in Brussels, a press release by the Estonian Foreign Ministry says.

The release issued today also says Estonia accepted Russia's proposal to hold the next round of talks in Moscow on Apr. 5-6, "despite a number of statements by Russian leaders, that are difficult to explain, on breaking off the negotiations and transfering the agreed final date for the withdrawal of troops."

The Estonian Foreign Ministry reminds that at the past round of the talks held in the seaside resort of Lohusalu near Tallinn, "the Russian side refused to pull out its remaining 2,600 troops from Estonia by the earlier agreed deadline—Aug. 31, 1994. The Russian representatives also moved forward new conditions for the troop withdrawal and did not propose a date for the next round" of talks, the statement says.

Estonia also says that a "quick and powerful" reaction from the West had influenced Russia to continue talks and abide by the troop withdrawal deadline.

Legislators Discuss Borders, Tartu Peace Treaty

WS1703181394 Tallinn Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press Release in English 1643 GMT 17 Mar 94

["Immediate release" from the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tallinn: "Estonian Parliamentarians Meet Counterparts in Moscow Today; Discussion Centers on Borders, Legal Continuity of Estonia"—received via Internet E-LIST]

[Text] March 17, 1994—Trivimi Velliste today explained to members of the Russian Parliament that the Tartu Peace Treaty, which determined the Estonian Russian border, is the only valid legal document on this matter. Velliste suggested that the deadlock on the border issue could be broken by moving that aspect of the Estonian-Russian negotiations into the framework of the European Stability Pact (Balladur Plan).

Velliste and Eino Tamm, both members of the Estonian Riigikogu's [parliament] Foreign Affairs Committee, are in Moscow at the invitation of the Russian Parliament's foreign relations committees to discuss the historic, legal, economic, social and other aspects of the Estonian-Russian border and border areas. Also participating in the debate were many Russian officials and representatives from oblasts and districts on the Estonian and Latvian borders. Among those speaking were Russian hard-liners from Narva, Vladimir Malkovski and Juri Mishin, former Interfront leader in Estonia, Yevgeni Kogan, and others.

The Russian officials and other representatives urged the Russian parliament to support unilateral demarcation by Russia of the current control line (essentially the same as the Estonian SSR-Russian border). Sections of Estonia in the southeastern corner of the country as well as territories east of Narva were illegally incorporated into the Russian SFSR by Stalin in 1944. Estonia is bound by its constitution to maintain the borders as set in 1920 by the Tartu Peace Treaty.

The Estonian and Russian parliamentarians agreed to continue contacts between the foreign relations committees.

Parliament Amends Law on Privatized Housing

WS1703155994 Tallinn BNS in English 1057 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Tallinn, Mar 17, BNS—The Estonian parliament on Wednesday [16 March] passed amendments to the law on the privatization of housing.

The amendments say the privatization voucher issued to Estonia's residents for their years of work may be transferred as a gift to the holder's parents, spouse, relatives in the descending line, sisters, brothers and their relatives, who are Estonian citizens or permanent residents of the country.

The law also gives the municipal and local commune governments the right to determine the houses that cannot be privatized because of plans to pull them down, their reconstruction, further use, or some other reason. The reason for the refusal must be made public.

Non-occupied housing premises can be privatized by Estonian residents of at least 18 years of age. The law says years of service in the KGB shall not be accounted in calculation of the length of employment in Estonia.

The parliament also approved an amendment to the tax regulations law, giving the government the right to extinguish debts of state companies going to privatization, or participate in management of the debts.

Damage Pay Ordered for Naming Alleged Informers

WS1703210894 Tallinn ETA in English 1753 GMT 17 Mar 94

["News Release"]

[Text] Tallinn, March 17—An Estonian weekly must pay damages and apologize publicly for publishing a list of alleged KGB informers in five articles last spring, the Tallinn City Court ruled on Thursday [17 March].

The court ruled the published data was false and the owner of the paper, AS Myyt, must in ten days apologize in the weekly "Eesti Aeg"(Estonian time) before the seven plaintiffs and play damages in the amount of 70,000 kroons ($5,000).

"Eesti Aeg" in its five issues last spring published the list of alleged KGB informers claiming the list had been found in a notebook of a KGP officer.

The list was quite lengthy, but only seven people decided to take legal action.

Latvia

Ulmanis Discusses 'Return to Europe' in Italy

WS1703183894 Tallinn BNS in English 1432 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Riga, Mar 17, BNS—"Latvia has never left Europe voluntarily, therefore one of the main tasks of its foreign policy is to integrate into Europe," Latvian President, Guntis Ulmanis, said Wednesday [16 March] during his meeting with Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro.

Ulmanis noted that the visit to Rome is connected with Latvia's striving to return to Europe.

Latvian president's office announces Ulmanis expressed his hope that, after the visit, meeting of Latvian and Italian governmental delegations will be possible to discuss more concrete issues on cooperation.

Ulmanis also informed Scalfaro about the regional cooperation among the Baltic states.

In return, Scalfaro said he supported Latvia's attempts to consolidate its historical position among the European states, and noted that cooperation with Latvia in the sphere of culture, art and education could be successful.

Latvian and Italian foreign ministers met Wednesday in Rome, and signed an agreement on economic, technical and scientific cooperation. They also discussed matters related to Russian army withdrawal from Latvia, Latvia's relations with the European Union and participation in NATO Partnership for Peace program.

More on Russian-Latvian Treaty on Troop Pullout

PM1703113194 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 17 Mar 94 p 3

[Report by Sergey Knyazkov under "Postscriptum: Events and Commentaries" rubric: "Final Summer in Jurmala. Russian and Latvian State Delegations Have Initialed a Treaty Under Which Russian Troops Will Quit Latvia Before 31 August 1994"]

[Text] Russia and Latvia have initialed a treaty on the terms, dates, and procedure for the full withdrawal of the Russian Federation Armed Forces from the territory of the Latvian Republic and on their legal status during the withdrawal period. It has been learned from the results of the talks in Moscow that this will take place before 31 August 1994. Sergey Zotov, head of the Russian delegation, called the initialing of the troop withdrawal treaty a "victory for common sense."

Apart from the treaty on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Latvia, the sides also initialed three important agreements concerning, in particular, the legal status of the radar station at Skrunda, social protection for the Russian servicemen and their family members temporarily stationed on and now leaving the territory of the Latvian Republic, and also social protection for the Russian military pensioners and their family members remaining in Latvia.

Andrey Andreyev, the Russian delegation's executive secretary, explained to KRASNAYA ZVEZDA's correspondent that Russia will keep its radar station for four years, and an extra 18 months will be set aside to dismantle it. But the question of rental for the radar station remained open.

In my view, the agreement on social protection for Russian servicemen and their family members should particularly single out aspects connected with housing. In particular, the Latvian side confirms the right of servicemen to sell apartments, to receive money for them, or to leave them to relatives or private persons: citizens or inhabitants of the Latvian Republic.

As for the agreement on social protection for military pensioners and their family members, the most important point in it is undoubtedly that the Latvian side has found the political will within itself and agreed to grant to all servicemen who transferred to the reserve before 28 January 1992 (the date the USSR Armed Forces stationed in Latvia passed to Russia's jurisdiction) the right to reside in the Latvian Republic without hindrance.

At the meeting which the two countries' delegations held it was confirmed in principle that they are prepared to sign a further eight interstate agreements. The sides will proceed from the premise that they can be signed in the event of a meeting between the presidents of the Russian Federation and the Latvian Republic. This could take place in the very near future.

Paper To Publish Draft of Pact

WS1703183794 Tallinn BNS in English 1432 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Riga, Mar 17, BNS—Latvian Justice Minister Egils Levits said Thursday [17 March] at the Saeima [parliament] plenary meeting that the government would publish agreements, parafied during Latvian-Russian talks, in Friday's issue of the official newspaper LATVIJAS VESTNESIS.

Levits noted that the publication contradicts with the international regulations which do not provide for publication of agreements not yet signed.

The above mentioned announcement was made responding to Latvian National Independence Movement's (LNIM) claim that the Saeima must acquaint the deputies within 24 hours with all agreements parafied [as received] during interstate talks with Russia.

Latvian Way faction leader Andrejs Pantelejevs said at the plenary meeting he was surprised that Fatherland and Freedom, and LNIM factions have asked people to picket without even knowing the contents of the agreements.

After returning from the round of talks in Moscow, Latvian delegation head, Martins Virsis, said Tuesday at a press briefing that the agreements will be made accessible only after they will be discussed by the Latvian Government.

Andrejevs Comments

LD1703205294 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2005 GMT 17 Mar 94

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Sergey Startsev]

[Text] Rome March 17 TASS—"A new page has been opened in our relations with Russia", Latvian Foreign Minister Georgs Andrejevs, currently on a visit to Italy, said assessing the agreement on Russian troop withdrawal from this Baltic state, which was initialled in Moscow on Tuesday.

"Time has not come yet to speak about a full success, but this agreement opens the way we would like to follow", Andrejevs said in an interview with TASS. "As far as possible, we heeded to pieces of advice from across the world, above all from the United States. We know that this compromise version was worked out at the Moscow summit between Presidents Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton. Then came our visit to Washington. During this visit, we received necessary explanations about why we should not be scared with this version", the minister noted.

Speaking about the Skrunda radar installation, which is to be kept by Russia for four years under the agreement, Andrejevs said: "Unfortunately, we have a bitter experience of 1993 related to military bases stationed in Latvia. It was not very long ago, however we need to change Latvian people's mentality. We should explain that times have changed, and Russia needs the Skrunda radar only as a means of obtaining information and not as a military installation. This was the issue that caused the main difficulties. There is quite a strong opposition in Latvia which demands a complete withdrawal of Russian troops in accordance with the Helsinki agreement. Nevertheless, we should display political realism in our onward advance", the Latvian minister stressed.

In conclusion, Andrejevs expressed hope that a Russian-Latvian summit would take place as soon as in early April, and the drafted documents would be signed. "Relations between Russia and Latvia should be much better than both sides sometimes describe them. The truth is somewhere between, and we are quite able to develop friendly relations", the minister emphasised.

Saeima Discusses Merits of Treaty

LD1703231394 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 2100 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] [Announcer] On Thursday in the Saeima there was much discussion of the Latvian-Russian talks. At a news conference, Egils Levits, Latvian Way faction deputy and justice minister, described the situation:

[Begin Levits recording] I think it is a considerable achievement for Latvian diplomacy that in the given circumstances we have brought it about that by 31 August the Russian Army will withdraw from Latvia; that Russia has stuck firmly to this date in this way; that we are to be given back the two new buildings at the Skrunda radar station, which they have to vacate for us as soon as the treaty is signed; that we have kept up this pressure, and I could remind you that our southern neighbor, Lithuania, two years ago caved in and had to pay for it with the zero option—so that all military personnel could stay in Lithuania. I do not see this as an achievement for the government, because it is not a government delegation, it is a Saeima delegation, and therefore, the co-authors of this achievement are also the LNNK [Latvian National Independence Movement]—including Aleksandrs Kirsteins, the leader of the LNNK faction, who took part in these talks all the time. A co-author in this achievement is Deputy Juris Sinka of the Fatherland and Freedom, who took part in these talks all the time and in no sense deviated from the common standpoint of the delegation, and also in relation to our partner in the talks, Russia, subscribed to the common position, and therefore I do not ascribe this achievement only to the government, the Latvian Way, or the Peasants' Union, but I also congratulate the LNNK and the Fatherland and Freedom. [end recording]

[Announcer] In his turn, Aleksandrs Kirsteins, the head of the LNNK faction, emphasized at a news conference that the Russian Army is being withdrawn from Latvia not because of agreements on paper but thanks to a whole complex of regulations and agreements with the United States, the G7, the European Union countries, the United Nations, and the CSCE. As Kirsteins said, as long ago as 1992, Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev announced that at the end of 1994 the troops will be withdrawn from the Baltic countries if the issue of some strategic bases was resolved.

British Government 'Speaks Highly'

WS1703182994 Tallinn BNS in English 1619 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Riga, Mar 17, BNS—The British Government issued a press statement Wednesday [16 March] in which it speaks highly of the Latvian-Russian interstate agreements, which were initialed March 14 in Moscow.

Under the agreements, Russia makes a commitment to get its remaining 12,000 troops out of Latvia by Aug. 31 while Latvia agrees that Russia operates the former Soviet military radar at Skrunda for four years and have 18 months to dismantle it.

The British Government hopes that similar agreements will soon be concluded between Estonia and Russia, according to the statement.

Protest Seeks Immediate Withdrawal

LD1703175194 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1000 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] A gathering of about 300 people protesting against the initialling of the Russian-Latvian interstate agreement and the functioning of the Skrunda radar station in Latvia after 31 August 1994 was held today at the Saeima building before the opening of a plenary session. The pickets demanded the immediate withdrawal of the occupying Russian army from the territory of Latvia.

Ostankino Given Demand To Pay Debt 'Immediately'

LD1803033494 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2335 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Latvia demands that the Ostankino television company immediately pay its debt for the transmission of its TV programs in the republic.

At a meeting in Riga Thursday the Latvian Council for TV and Radio Broadcasting decided to notify Ostankino that if by April 4 the debt for the 1st quarter is not repaid to Latvia, it will immediately consider cutting off the transmission of Ostankino TV programs on its territory.

So far, Ostankino has paid to the Latvian Council for TV and Radio Broadcasting only one third of the agreed amount.

Chairman of the Council Zigmunds Skujins said at the meeting that it is impossible to meet the demand of the second major faction of the Latvian parliament, the Movement for National Independence of Latvia, that the transmission of some Ostankino programs be stopped for political reasons.

Former KGB Chief Arrested on 'Genocide Charges'

WS1703183694 Tallinn BNS in English 1619 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Riga, Mar 17, BNS—The former Soviet Latvia's KGB chief, Alfons Noviks, was arrested Tuesday [15 March] on genocide charges.

During his active service in 1940s, Noviks conducted mass murders, persecutions and deportation of those Latvian residents who were unwelcome to the Soviet regime.

If convicted, Noviks faces three to 15 years in prison or life imprisonment.

Noviks was born in 1908.

Lithuania

Brazauskas, EU Envoys Discuss Relations

LD1703203194 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1700 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] President Algirdas Brazauskas and diplomats from the states of the European Union accredited in Vilnius held an informal discussion concerning Lithuania and the European Union [words indistinct]. During a working lunch at the Draugyste Hotel, preparation of the draft treaty on free trade between Lithuania and the European Union and the possibility of accelerating the signing of the treaty on Lithuania's associate membership—the European Treaty—was discussed.

The president again stressed Lithuania's aspiration to integrate into the European security, economic and political structures.

Petras Vaitiekunas, the president's adviser on foreign policy, who was present at the meeting, said that the ambassadors noted that Lithuania is in possession of the key out of Europe. According to the adviser the diplomats from the European states stressed that a civilized regulation of relations between Lithuania and Poland will be regarded by Europe very positively, and that Europe would welcome the signing of the interstate treaty.

NATO Official Received by Brazauskas

WS1803111394 Vilnius ELTA in English 2308 GMT 17 Mar 94

[From "News Bulletin" No. 459]

[Text] Vilnius, March 17, ELTA—NATO Military Committee Chairman Richard Vincent on a visit in Lithuania met with Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas on Thursday [17 March]. They discussed the "Partnership for Peace" programme, its practical aspects which guaranteed security.

Vincent emphasized that the programme was very broad, but, unfortunately, in the undestanding of many political figures it was encompassing only the cooperation in military sphere.

Vincent noted that the most important thing in the programme was the identity of both political and human virtues because post-communist countries joined the agreement. The programme "Partnership for Peace" was the adaptation period for the countries which sought NATO membership. During the period the aspiring countries would be observed by the Western countries in order to be sure they would orient themselves towards Western values, Vincent said.

Brazauskas also admitted that "Partnership for Peace" was considered as the process of acquiring NATO membership. Brazauskas approved Russia's decision to join the programme. It would be the greatest achievement in the meantime, if Russia signed the documents of the "Partnership for Peace" programme and took part in it with the same status like all other countries, Brazauskas noted.

Concludes Visit

WS1703210494 Tallinn BNS in English 1914 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Vilnius, Mar 17, BNS—Field Marshal Richard Vincent, chairman of the NATO Military Committee, on Thursday [17 March] ended his two-day visit to Lithuania.

On Thursday, the NATO official met with Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas and members of the parliament's National Security Committee.

Vincent held discussions at the Lithuanian Defense Ministry with members of the working group that was set up to prepare a presentation document for Lithuania's participation in the Partnership for Peace program.

Before departure, Vincent also visited the Lithuanian field army brigade Gelezinis Vilkas (Iron Wolf) and met with its commanders.

Foreign Minister To Sign Treaty With Poland

LD1703140694 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1000 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Povilas Gylys is leaving for Warsaw today where he intends to initial the Lithuanian-Polish treaty on friendly relations and good-neighborly cooperation tomorrow.

Lithuanian and Polish experts finished editing the text of the draft treaty last week.

The Nationalist Union Board has proposed in an appeal to President Algirdas Brazauskas, published today, that the main passages of the treaty be discussed without delay with all Lithuanian parties having representatives in the Seimas. The president is asked to take the initiative and reach agreement in this vitally important common national issue.

The Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has stressed in a statement that it rejects any pressure as an attempt to influence the course of negotiations and complicate mutual relations between states. It points out that in a democratic state trust in the quality of work by the diplomatic service is confirmed by the ratifying of signed agreements in parliament,

Deputy Foreign Minister Vladislovas Domarkas said today in an interview with Lithuanian radio that the contents of the present draft treaty should guarantee that there will be no territorial claims between the two states and that national minorities in the two states will behave in accordance with the laws of the state where they reside. The states, for their part, are obliged, in accordance with international standards, to guarantee corresponding rights to national minorities. This treaty, undoubtedly, will not bar the way to the further examination of sensitive issues. Historians and public organizations will be able to continue their discussions on the past, but these discussions and the analysis of history must not put the lid on the future. On the contrary, we should pay more attention to joint work in the economy, culture, education, and other spheres so that we can join Europe as soon as possible, Vladislovas Domarkas said, concluding his interview.

After the Lithuanian-Polish treaty has been initialled in Warsaw on Friday, it is due to be signed by the Lithuanian and Polish presidents during their forthcoming meeting.

LDDP Condemns Centrist Leader's Remarks

WS1703115494 Vilnius TIESA in Lithuanian 12 Mar 94 No. 49 p 2

[Statement by the LDDP Council Presidium and the LDDP Seimas faction]

[Text] Recently, Lithuanian Center Union Chairman R. Ozolas made several statements which, in our opinion, deteriorate Lithuania's interstate relations, the development of friendly ties with neighboring countries, and instigate ethnic minorities residing in Lithuania.

The assessment of separate foreign ambassadors [reference to Polish and Belarusian envoys] working in Lithuania is another attempt to complicate our relations with neighbors, the process of negotiations, and the signing of agreements on friendship and cooperation.

The Presidium of the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party [LDDP] Council and the LDDP Seimas [parliament] faction categorically disagree with the moves of Seimas deputy R. Ozolas. We believe that such actions not only [illegible] protect the interests of the state and the nation, as they are often interpreted, but are even damaging to them. Nationalism and the scoring of historical accounts are outdated matters in today's Europe, impeding the construction of a common European home.

Nationalists Urge Debate

WS1703210794 Tallinn BNS in English 1914 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Vilnius, Mar 17, BNS—The political treaty between Lithuania and Poland is not a responsibility of a single party, even the party in power, but a concern of the entire Lithuanian nation, the Board of the Lithuanian Union of Nationalists (LUN) said Thursday [17 March].

In an address to President Algirdas Brazauskas, the LUN suggested to discuss the basic principles of the treaty with all political parties represented in the parliament.

The union asks the president to "take the initiative and to achieve a general agreement on this vitally important" problem.

Protest Rally Held

WS1803111694 Vilnius ELTA in English 2308 GMT 17 Mar 94

[From "News Bulletin" No. 459]

[Text] Vilnius, March 17, ELTA—A rally concerning the Lithuanian-Polish agreement was organized by seven parties and movements and held in the Independnce square on Thursday [17 March].

The participants of the rally which gathered several hundred people demanded that the historical fact of the occupation of Vilnius region by Polish Army in 1920 should be included into the agreement. They urged Foreign Minister Povilas Gylys to refuse signing the agreement on March 18.

'One More' Border Incident Involves Russians

WS1703160394 Tallinn BNS in English 1057 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] Vilnius, Mar 17, BNS—One more border incident involving armed Russian servicemen occurred on the Lithuanian-Russian border this week.

An armed Russian convoy escorting governmental mail was taken-off a Moscow-Kaliningrad train because the Russians did not have permission to carry weapons on Lithuanian territory. Lithuanian border guards disarmed the Russian soldiers and handed them over to the police.

The convoys explained that they were supposed to deliver the mail by plane, but their flight was canceled and they had to take a train. The Russians were given back their weapons and were allowed to board another train.

Colonel Pranas Dragunaitis, head of the Lithuanian Border Defense Service, discussed the incident with representatives of the Russian troops stationed in the Kaliningrad region. Dragunaitis emphasized the need to put a stop to violations of armed servicemen transit regulations.

The Lithuanian official said the rules of transporting weapons through Lithuanian territory must be strictly observed. He noted that Lithuanian border guards will never make any concessions to anybody and will always act in accordance with the law.

Russian Train With Methanol Detained

WS1703115294 Vilnius RESPUBLIKA in Lithuanian 9 Mar 94 No. 46 p 2

[Report by Remigijus Barauskas: "A Dangerous Load in Radviliskis"]

[Text] Seventeen cisterns with almost 900 tonnes of methanol have been detained at the Radviliskis railway station since last Thursday [3 March]. The attempts of a Russian firm to ship this load through Lithuania to Germany failed for the second time.

Our customs officials detained the train for the first time on 6 January at the Vaidotai station. Since the consignor had no permit from the Environmental Protection Department, Lithuanian officials turned the train back. After the attempt to bring the methanol in from Belarus had failed, the firm tried to do this from Latvia's territory. On Thursday, the cisterns arrived from Daugavpils to Radviliskis. From there they had to travel to the port of Klaipeda, and later by the Mukran ferry to Germany. However, Lithuanian customs officials detained the load again.

According to F. Stankevicius, senior inspector of the Customs Work Organization Division at the Customs Department, Lithuania is currently negotiating with the Latvians on the return of the methanol. However, Latvia does not yet want to accept the load that is dangerous to the environment.

Ostankino TV To Be Curtailed if Debt Not Repaid

LD1703113394 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 0530 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] The management of Lithuanian Radio and TV has officially announced the partial curtailment of the relay of the Ostankino TV channel if Ostankino does not pay its debt to Lithuanian communications men by the beginning of April. The decision has been taken, ANI agency notes, despite the fact that the Ostankino TV channel is the only Russian TV channel relayed throughout Lithuania and has the highest rating in the republic. According to the calculations of Lithuanian communications men, the debt of the transmitting station in Moscow equals approximately 1 billion lits or $250,000. Evidently it is appropriate to remember that in all civilized countries of the world it is the receiving side that pays for the transmission of broadcasts but in our country it is the other way round.

State Border With Latvia Restored; Maps Approved

WS1803111494 Vilnius ELTA in English 2308 GMT 17 Mar 94

[From "News Bulletin" No. 459]

[Text] Vilnius, March 17, ELTA—The Lithuanian-Latvian border was restored at the meeting of the delegations of the two states on Thursday [17 March].

Representatives of the land exploitation service from Pasvalys, Rokiskis and Daugpilis reached the agreement on the sectors of the common border and approved the map of redelimitation with the restored border between Lithuania and Latvia.

Press Conference on Aims of Ruling Party Faction

LD1703162294 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1200 GMT 17 Mar 94

[Text] At today's press conference in the Seimas, the chairman of the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party faction, Justinas Karosas, who has been reelected in his post, and other members of the ruling party faction were telling about closed meetings which examined the faction's work. According to Justinas Karosas, it is possible to state that the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party had succeeded in realizing a consistent political orientation. Some social democratic programs have not been implemented.

According the leader of the faction, the maneuvering by the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party between liberalism and social democracy is adequate. Speaking of the problems of work by the party, Justinas Karosas mentioned lack of coordination of actions. Therefore it has been decided to form working groups of the representatives of the faction, the president's office and the government which will coordinate the reception of foreign guests. Justinas Karosas accentuated that the matter concerns only legislation and there are no attempts to influence all actions by the government.

Amendments to the faction's statute have been discussed at the meetings. This document will deal more in detail not only with the formation of the faction but also of the whole Seimas leadership.